



A  
BURNE-JONES  
HEAD

CLARA SHERWOOD ROLLINS

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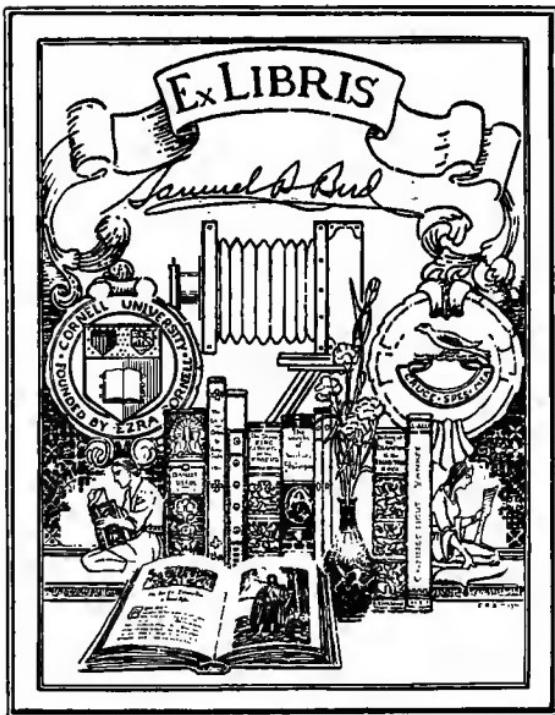
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# A BURNE-JONES HEAD

*And Other  
Sketches*

BY

CLARA SHERWOOD ROLLINS



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A Burne-Jones Head



## A BURNE-JONES HEAD.

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MRS. TILLBURY called her a Burne-Jones Head, and Mrs. Tillbury was a woman who possessed a vast knowledge of art in general and the world in particular.

She gave dinners for her protégé, to which she invited the indolent dilettante Bohemian New York circle of which she was perhaps the centre. And as the Burne-Jones head was attached to a very beautiful body the men raved over her. Women thought her stupid, but she became the fashion all the same, for she was a novelty and her voice was wonderfully sweet.

Henner would have delighted in her copper hair and warm flesh tints—still

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when she sang and raised her eyes, there was a look of a Madonna about her.

Then Otis Peyton would lean back in his chair and gaze at her with half-closed eyes, inwardly delighted at the ecstasies of little Busby the pianist.

In reality she was Peyton's discovery. He was a genuine lover of good music, and had met her through old Padronti, her singing-master, with whom she was diligently studying. Peyton liked Padronti and often asked him to dine or went to his rooms when there were no pupils, to listen for hours to "Parsifal" or "Tristan und Isolde," which the old man played remarkably well.

One rainy afternoon Otis Peyton was driving up-town from the Club. He had promised to take tea with a vivacious little married woman of his acquaintance who affected the Turkish—and other things. He was a bit early, and remembering that Padronti usually reserved that hour of the day for himself, he gave or-

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ders to stop at the studio. As he entered he heard voices—Padronti's in a high mimicking falsetto—a musical laugh which was not Padronti's—then a burst of song in a glorious contralto voice,—a joyous little bit of Riese's “Hinaus,” which she sang in excellent German. Peyton listened enchanted, and though a heavy portière concealed the musicians he could not resist adding his applause to Padronti's cries of “Brava!”

The old man came out delighted to find that it was Peyton, and seizing his arm drew him at once into the next room, where he presented him with much flourish and enthusiasm to Mrs. Rogers.

Peyton always remembered her as she looked that afternoon—radiant with the joy of singing and her master's praise. She wore a close-fitting black gown and a large black hat which became her vastly.

Padronti explained that they were having some music—not a lesson.

“To-day we amuse ourselves. We can-

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not always work. But you—why were you not last night at the musicale? How I did wish for you! That man—how he did sing! I have just shown it to Mrs. Rogairs—and that Busby. How did he play?—like this.” And he played a few chords from the Pilgrim Chorus of “Tannhäuser,” with heavy precision, singing at the same time with a nasal twang, “Ta *ta*, ta *ta*, ta ta ta ta. It was horrible. That Busby who looks like a Chinaman. What does he know about music?”

Mrs. Rogers laughed again.

“But do show Mr. Peyton how the woman sang ‘Ich Grolle Nicht.’ ”

“I think I heard the finale of the imitation as I came in, just before your song,” said Peyton.

“Ah yes! Let us have no more imitations. We will have the song as it should be sung. Come, Mrs. Rogairs,” and Pandroni sat down at the piano and began to play the harmonious accompaniment of Schumann’s exquisite song.

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After that Peyton thought no more about afternoon tea, and only remembered that his brougham was at the door when Mrs. Rogers said she must go. Whereupon he offered her its protection from the elements.

She gave him a number in East 27th Street, which he repeated to the coachman and then sat down beside her.

"Do you know," she said, as they rolled down Fifth Avenue, "this constant roar in New York almost appalls me. It confuses my thoughts and wears on my nerves. Sometimes I feel that I must cry out 'Stop' at the top of my voice to the invisible power that seems to be eternally lashing on these human animals to a greater speed. Oh, the noise of their living!" And, with a little shudder, she put her hands to her ears.

He smiled.

"That is music to most of us—the music we dance to."

"But you dance too much. You will

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kill yourselves. You lash yourselves into a frenzy like howling dervishes."

"You have seen them at their feasts in Tangiers? Their dancing and all the rest of it?"

"I? Oh, no! But I have read of it. I have not travelled—much."

"It is a horrible sight—and yet intensely interesting, if you care for what a friend of mine calls 'the human.'"

"Yes, I do care for it, but one need not go to Tangiers to study the human—see there!"

"I only see a double line of umbrellas. One line moving up, the inside line moving down the Avenue."

"An umbrella on the Avenue—  
A plain umbrella is to you"—

And it is nothing more," she said smiling.  
"I thank the little god who presided over my nativity for endowing me with the faculty of peering under umbrellas, and seeing something besides primroses."

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He laughed.

"But it's not good enough—if one might see anything so interesting as a primrose by looking under an umbrella."

"Now you are making fun of my mixed metaphor. They are a bad habit of mine—something like planning a spring bonnet that you intend to make yourself. The result is so satisfactory until you carry it into execution."

"But really, you know, I never planned a spring bonnet in my life—and, besides, I wasn't chaffing you about your primroses. I like the idea. Now, for instance, there is a very yellow one sitting by the gutter's brim with a hand-organ. And, by Jove! if she isn't playing, 'Daddy wouldn't buy me a bow-wow,' though it's raining cats and dogs."

She laughed with childish delight at his nonsense as they turned into 27th Street, though she said with mock severity, "Mr. Peyton, you are frivolous."

"I am, indeed. But I will stop danc-

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ing now that we are away from the music. How still it seems after the Avenue. I heard a countryman from Iowa say the other day that New York made him feel as though he had cotton in his ears."

"Ah!" she cried, "he was indeed a countryman—of mine. I felt the same thing at first, and my home is in Iowa."

He was conscious of a slight inward shock at this, though he had felt sure from her speech that she was not a New Yorker. For words and phrases are as much a thing of fashion in that city of fashions as are customs and costumes. There were certain expressions she employed which society, for reasons known only to itself, had boycotted, and she had not yet acquired the trick of expression and the set formula of words that decorum permitted. But Iowa seemed to him unpardonable. How could she have come from Iowa?

"You have always lived there?" he asked.

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"For the last ten years—before that we lived in Kansas City. Our farm is about thirty miles from Keokuk—Ah! your man is driving past the house. No—he is stopping."

As they walked up the steps he wondered whether she would ask him in—if she were stopping with friends from Keokuk, or if it were only a boarding-house—and would he meet Mr. Rogers? She had not mentioned him. And he looked at her black gown. No, it was evidently not mourning.

The door opened. She gave him her hand.

"I thank you very much for bringing me here so comfortably. I shall write to my husband of the charming afternoon I have spent."

"He is not here—Mr. Rogers?"

"Oh, no. He couldn't possibly leave. I am quite alone—at least, I am boarding with some old friends of Mr. Rogers—very musical people and" (with a glance over

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her shoulder) "very queer. They would amuse you."

"May I not come some time to see you and meet them?"

She hesitated. "You are very kind to be interested in my music—I have done nothing but work the two weeks I have been here. I think—if you really care for my singing—I think Mr. Rogers would be glad to have you come to see me if you like."

"I will come."

Again he took her hand and bowed low over it—a little trick of his that women found charming. Then he went away.

He dismissed his brougham, as it had stopped raining, and sauntered back to Padronti's rooms.

She was in his mind, and he was unconsciously thinking over all she had said as he walked along, bowing now and then in an abstracted way to a friend, or in response to a smile flashed at him from a passing carriage.

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What a voice she had!—musical in conversation, too—and what she said was rather original, certainly interesting. And from Iowa. Where did she get that self-poise—that perfect composure? How superb she must be in evening-dress! Then he suddenly decided to give a dinner the following Thursday.

“Padronti, old chap,” he cried, slapping the musician between the shoulders as he bent over some music he was copying, “Padronti—I have discovered that man is born, woman is created. There are self-made men, but a woman is what she is born. She is what she *is*—whether the detail of birth happens to have taken place at Kamschatka or—Iowa; and I want you to dine with me next Thursday night.”

“Oh, what nonsense you talk, my friend! As for dining with you, that I will of course do with pleasure. But what you think of that voice—that voice of Mrs. Rogairs? Is it not a marvel?—Such timbre—such—but you agree? You have enjoyed it?”

"Wonderful! You must bring her Thursday night. I shall ask some musical people to meet her. Who is she anyway, Padroni? Where did you find her?"

"She has come to me with a man—her husband—it is two weeks since. She is very anxious to be a great singer, and she will be. Her husband does not like it very much, I think. But she has begged—how is it?—*coaxed* him, and so he has allowed for this winter only just a trial."

"What kind of a man was her husband?"

Padroni shrugged his shoulders.

"You ask me that. What do I care for the man when I hear such a voice? Do I see him at all? No. He is her husband—a man—that is all I know. He does not like the stage. He is perhaps what you call a *Presbyterian*."

"Does she think of going on the stage?"

"I think of it. It is a voice for the stage. *She* talks of Oratorio—bah! Well, it is not my business. I am but her

teacher. With pleasure I will bring her to your dinner if she will come."

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The next day Peyton sent Mrs. Rogers a collection of Irish ballads of which he was very fond, and that evening found at his rooms the very note he expected from her. Rather prim—but thanking him warmly for the songs, which she hoped to sing for him some day.

Peyton read it over two or three times and decided that the some day should be to-morrow. Accordingly he presented himself in 27th Street at five o'clock and was so fortunate as to find her at home. He was ushered into a dark room that smelled of sandal-wood and Japanese goods. His description of it delighted Mrs. Rogers afterward.

He said in a sepulchral voice: "I entered. It was very dark. First I stumbled over something. On close examination I discovered that it was a Hindoo idol that grinned viciously at me. At this

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I stood erect and hit my head against a Chinese gong that rang out like a knell. Somewhat startled, I stepped back and just missed upsetting a tea-table. I sat down on the nearest chair. It cracked with my weight. I chose another, and an uncanny Chinese poodle ran out from under it. I started up in terror, when the door opened and you came in like the convenient fairy in a play."

She laughed, and explained to him something about the people as she drew the curtains and gave a more cheerful appearance to the room.

As they talked he grew more and more impressed with the contradiction of her personality. She appeared a woman of the world and was in reality a child. Utterly inexperienced—ignorant of life, except as she had seen it in books, she reminded Peyton of a foreigner who learns to read and speak English in his own country. She possessed absolutely no personal knowledge of the world—she only

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knew how to spell its customs. She was a new being to Peyton, and he was not different from other men in enjoying novelty.

After all, what a blessing it is that the human animal craves change, since it is the only thing in life he is sure of getting!

Later she sang some of his simple ballads in a way that aroused all the artist in him.

"Ah! You must sing that Thursday night," he cried.

"Thursday night," she repeated.

"Yes. I have asked Padroni and some other musical people to dine with me, and have promised them the pleasure of hearing you sing. You will come—will you not? You will not disappoint them—and me?"

She looked at him a moment and dropped her eyes. She seemed considering.

"I should love it," she said, "but—Mr. Peyton, you must tell me—I am very ignorant—is it right? Is it really true that

New York women go about without their husbands?"

"Were Mr. Rogers here, I should certainly not ask you without him, but since he is not, Mrs. Rogers, there is surely no reason why you should not dine at my house with Padroni, some married women who are friends of mine, and a few stray men. They are all intensely musical, you would enjoy it, and it is quite all right, I assure you."

After a little pause she said:

"I am afraid that Dick—Mr. Rogers—would not like it."

He made no reply, and she added, with childlike impulsiveness, "Besides, I have nothing to wear."

They looked at each other for a moment and then laughed merrily.

"You will think me very ridiculous—I have no right to tell you of my affairs, but I—that is, we—we are not rich, and I have to be very economical here. So I have as few gowns as possible. I don't know why

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I tell you this—but you have been so kind,  
and I have no friends here."

He thought for a moment that she was going to cry. She had blushed furiously during her jerky little confidence, and he felt absurdly like putting his hand in his pocket and saying, like the kind gentleman in the stories, "Here, little girl, is a hundred dollars for you. Run down-town and buy yourself a frock."

But he didn't say it, and she did not cry. Each looked at the other and then they laughed again, like children.

There are moments of perfect sympathy, of silent understanding in life, that make up for the years we spend shouting explanations to each other above the noise of living.

In these moments each seems to look into the other's soul with a glance that leaves its record there and makes those souls akin forever—in a way. One such moment counts for more than years of ordinary friendship.

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Sometimes it comes with laughter,—sometimes with tears. After all, one can scarcely tell in this funny world where tears end and laughter begins. The line between tragedy and comedy is so indistinct, and we are often funniest when we are most in earnest.

By the way, Jove must find many other things to amuse him besides lovers' perjuries.

A moment like this was on duty when these two human beings looked into each other's eyes and laughed. After that they had known one another always.

"But—I think I can manage something," she said, after a moment. "Yes, I will go."

Peyton wondered as he walked home if she were hesitating over her husband's wishes or the gown. He thought it was the latter, and mentally put Rogers down as a hopeless idiot.

It is a sort of tradition among men that women are harsh in their judgment

of their own sex. This must be true, for men see it without removing the beam from their own eye.

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Mrs. Rogers was radiant at the dinner on Thursday night.

She wore a white gown which, she confided to Peyton, she had evolved.

"As you do your lovely mixed metaphors," he answered.

Her arms and shoulders were so beautiful that one hardly noticed the simple gown, which she wore as a queen wears her purple.

If women only knew how much more there is in the wearing of a gown than in the gown itself!

The dinner was a great success. So was Mrs. Rogers. Mrs. Tillbury raved over her, claimed her for her own, placed the Tillbury arms upon her, and christened her "a Burne-Jones."

And thus it was that the Burne-Jones head, after being approved at the private

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view, was exhibited to the world—that is, to Mrs. Tillbury's world.

When Peyton discerned that her eccentric wing had been placed over Mrs. Rogers, he took care that the credit of discovering the Burne-Jones should be Mrs. Tillbury's. He accordingly took a back seat, enjoying the performance none the less and the meetings with the prima donna all the more—behind the scenes.

Otis Peyton was not a bad fellow. He had his standards of honour and truth and justice, which he flattered himself he lived up to rather better than most men—like the rich young person in the Bible who had done all these things from his youth up. He was simply idle, and rather enjoyed drifting through life. He rather enjoyed drifting into the weird drawing-room in 27th Street of an afternoon until it became a habit. Then he enjoyed the habit.

After all, as a rule, our habits are only

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full-grown whims—but we seldom recognize them. They spring up so suddenly or grow so gradually—the result is the same.

This time the whim grew so gradually that neither was aware that it had become a habit.

The odor of sandal-wood was oppressive in the drawing-room, a walk on the Avenue was vastly preferable. Then, as the days grew longer, a spin in the Park in Peyton's smart spider, behind his favorite bays, was even more pleasant.

Besides being creatures of habit we are never allowed to forget that we are creatures of circumstance. And there were so many circumstances like dinners, teas, musicales, and the opera, where they were constantly "thrown together," as the saying is.

The first white "evolution" was followed by a black gown, which was still more effective. And there was a bodice of rare old brocade which a malicious woman de-

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clared she had seen as a piece of drapery in Mr. Peyton's rooms.

If it were true, Peyton should have known better. She was a child in such matters, and took a keen delight in his interest in her gowns. Indeed, they often planned them together with a disregard for conventionality that was almost pastoral in its innocence and truly enchanting.

On the night of Mrs. Tillbury's first dinner for the Burne-Jones, he gave her a beautiful plumed fan which he called her sceptre, and overcame her hesitation about accepting it by assuring her that he had given her hostess a far handsomer one the week before.

So she took it and wielded it like a queen.

There was a basis of truth in Peyton's joking remark to Padronti about women being born, not made. Now and then we see the phenomenon. A woman will step from obscurity into the social world with all its novelties and complexities as though

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she had been born in it. She seems to possess what Kant would have called a cognition *a priori*, and nothing would convince Mr. Galton that she hadn't a grandmother. But sometimes they haven't any—to speak of.

Otis Peyton was proving the old French proverb, *Qui s'amuse, amuse*, to the queen's taste—the queen who wielded his fan—and to his own.

If she spoke less frequently of "Dick," he didn't notice it, for "Dick" was a bore, he thought, and he had much rather hear her mimic the man who sat on her other hand at dinner. She was clever at this and had a keen sense of humor. Then, she had read and still found time to read a great deal, and sometimes they read together.

She wrote of all this to her husband. At least, she thought she did. She certainly chronicled conscientiously all her doings, though, perhaps, "Mr. Peyton" dropped out of her letters as "Dick" had

dropped out of their conversations. And so the days passed until April, when Mr. Busby wrote an operetta in one act, which was very clever in spite of his resemblance to a Chinaman which so distressed Padroni. The Burne-Jones was to sing the leading part. The piece was written for her, and the affair was to be an event given in the ball-room of the great Mrs. A.

The Burne-Jones was almost too much of a success to please Mrs. Tillbury. She liked to have her taste approved, but Peyton had always been at *her* elbow more or less. Now it was decidedly less. Besides, she had not been consulted in the management and arrangement of the operetta. However, she concealed all feeling of discontent beneath her most fascinating smile, and in the most obliging manner arranged to call for her ex-protégé with her brougham on the night of the occasion. That afternoon came a letter from Mr. Rogers,—a jubilant letter, bursting

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with happiness, because at the last moment he had succeeded in arranging his affairs so that he could leave home and go with her to the "entertainment," as he called it.

The Burne-Jones eyebrows contracted slightly at this, and it was with conflicting emotions that she wrote a few lines of regret to Mrs. Tillbury explaining that she expected her husband, whom she hoped to have the pleasure of presenting after the play.

Half-an-hour before the time to start, a telegram announced that a freight wreck on the road west of Philadelphia had delayed him so hopelessly that he would stop in that city over-night. It appeared he had some business there, and would come over to New York some time the next day.

She was too hurried and nervous to be sorry, but as her cab rattled up Fifth Avenue, she was conscious of a distinct feeling of relief, which she hated to acknowledge. She knew in her innermost soul that she

had wondered with misgivings how "Dick" would appear in her new world, and how he would be thought of by her new friends.

In innocence or in ignorance she called them *friends*.

Of all the ill-used words in the English language, the word "friend" has greatest cause for complaint. Sometimes one wonders why such a word was ever made. There is so small a demand for it in its real meaning. It should be recoined—the original stamp is almost obliterated.

She knew that there was a record of these traitor doubts in that remote corner of the brain which one reserves for thoughts that one is rather ashamed of; and to drive away the memory of them she opened a little case, which until then she had held tightly clasped in her hands.

It was a necklace of topaz set in small diamonds, of a rich Oriental design, which Peyton had drawn himself.

Of course, she could not keep it. She

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had reproved him for bringing it that afternoon even before she had opened her husband's letter. But it was very beautiful. She had clasped and unclasped it about her throat a dozen times since he left. He had begged her at least to wear it that night—that one night. Surely there was no harm in wearing it once. It was just the touch that her simple gown needed—and she promised. Then, when she had read her husband's letter, she took the necklace off and put it away, feeling that it would be impossible to wear it or even show it to him. He would not understand—and for the first time she saw how fatally Peyton's motive was subject to misconstruction. She wondered at her foolishness in consenting to wear it. So she had taken the case, resolving to return it to him before the curtain went up. He was sure to be behind the scenes.

How it sparkled in the electric light that flashed in at the cab windows. It was warm and her cloak had fallen open at the

throat. She could see herself dimly in the narrow little mirror. A sudden thought came to her—she had not seen it with her gown. Yielding to the impulse she fastened it about her neck, and as she leaned forward to see better the cab stopped. She was there. It was late. Little Busby was wild with excitement. She had no time to think, and only slipped the empty case into the pocket of her cloak as the maid took it away. After that, all thought of the necklace was driven from her mind by an incident that occurred behind the scenes.

A group of young men and girls who formed the chorus were laughing and chattering there before the curtain rose. Peyton, though very near, was completely hidden from them by a bit of landscape while he waited for Mrs. Rogers, who unfortunately was looking for him in that vicinity at the same moment.

He heard some one say, "By the way, where is the Burne-Jones?"

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"She must be here, for I saw Peyton a moment ago."

At this witty sally all laughed.

"But I understand that we are to have an occult exhibition to-night—something hitherto unseen and unknown. Mrs. Tillbury tells me that *Mr.* Rogers is actually to appear to-night."

More suppressed laughter.

"Surely you are not so credulous as to believe in *that* myth," a woman remarked.

"I am thoroughly agnostic on the subject of Rogers, but she was a sweet woman, and I am sorry to see her lose caste."

"Caste! She never had any caste until she took part in this affair. She simply *was* cast—upon us."

"Oh, come, Teddy," said another, "none of your bad jokes when everybody knows that she snubbed you for Peyton."

"Oh, well!" said the first, "it is all summed up in the statement that the Burne-Jones head is turned."

Then the first bell sounded and there was a general scattering and confusion.

Peyton's heart smote him. He knew that he was to blame, and the convenient and usually unobtrusive thing he called his conscience gave him a sharp stab. He had no opportunity of speaking to Mrs. Rogers, as the curtain went up almost immediately. So he tried to shake off the unpleasant effects of what he had overheard, and went back to his seat well to the front in the audience.

She was so beautiful that Peyton had hardly noticed her singing (he had heard the rehearsal so often), until Mrs. Tillbury touched his arm and leaning over whispered, "What a pity she isn't in voice tonight."

He resented this, though he did observe then that she sang with less expression than usual. He thought she was frightened perhaps, but as the piece progressed he saw that this could not be. Her voice was clear, sweet, and true, but lacked that

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exquisite sympathy which was its greatest charm.

Just before the love-song, which Busby considered his *chef-d'œuvre* and which she had sung so marvellously at the rehearsals, she put her hand to her throat and suddenly grew so disconcerted that Peyton feared she could not sing. She recovered almost instantly, however, and sang well, though Padronti, who had heard her sing it before, shook his head regretfully.

The operetta ended with a song of renunciation, in which the heroine, having found her lover faithless, gave up the world and determined to enter a convent.

Into this Mrs. Rogers threw her whole soul. For the first time that evening she forgot herself—forgot everything except the woes of this woman whom she impersonated. She was giving up the world—the cruel, heartless world, where she had made so many mistakes. The Madonna-look came into her face, and as the curtain fell Padronti's cries of “Brava”

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rang above the applause that filled the room.

Then for the first time Peyton understood. She had heard.

Afterward she was surrounded by men and congratulated, but she seemed anxious to get away from it all. The women held aloof, and when she asked Peyton to take her to Mrs. Tillbury, that lady greeted her with elevated eyebrows and a quizzical voice—also elevated—that asked for Mr. Rogers. The face of the Burne-Jones flushed, but she replied quietly:

“There was a freight wreck on the road which delayed him, and I came to ask if you would take me home, since you were good enough to ask me to come with you.”

“So sorry, my dear, but I go home with the Bleeckers. However, Mr. Peyton’s brougham is at your service, I am sure—eh, Otis?”—and she laughed disagreeably. “What a beautiful necklace, Mrs. Rogers!” she added.

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Again the blood mounted to the roots of the copper-colored hair.

"It is not mine," she said, and added with a forced laugh, "It is borrowed finery;" then she turned to Peyton and said imploringly in a low voice, "Oh, take me home!"

His answering look of sympathy comforted her, and she ran the gantlet of compliments and pretty speeches to the door of the cloak-room without faltering.

They drove for some distance in silence. Then with something like a sob she put her hand out to him. "You are my only friend," she said.

He took the hand and kissed it gently where the glove was unbuttoned at the wrist.

He was very remorseful. He felt that he had brought her all this pain.

"Not a very good friend, I am afraid—dear."

He had meant to say it so calmly, but all the tenderness in his being, all the love that he thought himself incapable of, all

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the yearning that he thought killed out long ago, rushed into his heart—to his brain—to his lips. After all he was only a man—and he added:

"Not a friend at all—if I could only tell you how I care for you—how I——"

"Don't!" she cried, and burst into tears.

He never could remember what he said then. It all seemed so impossible the next day, but he knew that he had kissed her, and cherished the memory, though he thought himself contemptible at the same time.

We often soothe our consciences by telling ourselves that we are contemptible. After that we feel more at liberty to contemplate the pleasant side of our offences.

Peyton thought himself contemptible and wondered how it would all end. He also recalled every detail of that drive home.

Early the next afternoon he walked around to 27th street, having left orders

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for his groom to meet him there in half-an-hour with the spider.

The day was one of those forerunners of summer that come to brighten the chill weeks of early spring. There was a delicious languor in the air that made driving more pleasant than the exertion of walking, and he was glad when he reached the house.

The door was open, and after ringing the bell he walked in, expecting to find her as he often did in the drawing-room.

No one was there, and the house was very still.

A book lay open upon a chair, with a tortoise-shell hairpin between the leaves.

He smiled as he recognized the little volume of "Marcus Aurelius" that he had given her. Then his eye wandered over the marked paragraph:

"But perhaps the desire for the thing called fame will torment thee. See how soon everything is forgotten and look at the chaos of infinite time on each side of

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the present and the emptiness of applause . . . and the want of judgment in those who pretend to give praise . . . and be quiet at last. For the whole earth is a point, and how small a nook is thy dwelling and how few there are in it, and what kind of people are they who will praise thee."

"Poor child!" he murmured.

He turned back to a page that seemed blurred as though with tears and caught the words:

"And the soul is a whirl, and fortune hard to divine, and fame a thing devoid of judgment . . . and what belongs to the soul is a dream and a vapor and life is a warfare—a stranger's sojourn——"

Suddenly he raised his head and listened. He heard something that sounded like muffled sobbing. Then a man's voice said:

"It is all my fault—I am older than you—I should have known better than to have let you come alone; I was a fool—an idiot. Don't blame yourself, dear. We will go

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home and forget all about it. Don't cry, darling. I can't bear to see you so."

Peyton heard the words in a vague way and wondered if there were new lodgers in the house. More friends from Iowa, perhaps. Then he rose with the intention of announcing himself a second time—or trying to—when another voice—*her* voice—thrilled through every fibre of his being. He stood as though petrified—absolutely unconscious of himself—scarcely comprehending her words, only hearing her voice as she said hurriedly:

"But I haven't told you everything. There is still something that I must tell you. Do not think that I have not loved you—for I have—all the time. You will not believe it, but it is true. You are my anchor, Dick, but I am not worthy of you—I never was. Oh, if you love me take me away from this place and save me from myself! But when I tell you, you will never speak to me again—still I must tell you. It was all so gradual; he was so

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kind and I had no friends,—and I didn't know how much I—I cared for him until last night—and—yes, I *will* tell you—last night I realized that I——”

“*Don't say it!*” The man's voice was deep with pain. It aroused Peyton from his dazed state and he dashed out of the house.

When he reached the corner he found that the little tortoise-shell hairpin was broken in his left hand, and the points had pierced through the glove deep into his palm.

In the next square he met his spider. The groom was at the horses' heads in an instant and only had time to spring to his seat before Peyton was off, driving rapidly up the Avenue.

His teeth were set hard and the sensitive mouths of his bays suffered a little, but his friends whom he met in the Park little guessed the conflict that was raging in his brain.

One of the strangest tricks of memory is

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its power to retain clear impressions of the merest trifles observed when the brain is deeply absorbed in matters of far greater importance.

Snatches from the marked paragraph of Marcus Aurelius kept ringing through Peyton's thoughts. "Life is a warfare—a stranger's sojourn . . . and look at the chaos of infinite time on each side of the present . . . and be quiet at last."

He drove for two hours, and had just flung himself into an easy-chair in what he called his den, when his valet brought him a card.

"The gentleman is here, sir," he said, and glided out through another door.

Peyton looked at the card and saw written in a clear, firm hand:

"Richard Rogers."

A thousand thoughts rushed through his brain, but he had no time to listen to them. He rose with perfect outward calm to meet his guest, who stood just inside the door.

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His glance met a pair of clear blue eyes that had looked into the world for thirty-five or forty years without seeing its wickedness and folly.

"Mr. Rogers?" said Peyton advancing.

"Yes. Mr. Peyton, I believe."

And they shook hands.

If Clotho and the other spinners of human fate have time to observe the individual threads, they must have been interested just then by what was going on in the brains of these two beings.

Peyton acknowledged that there was strength and purity in the clean-shaven face before him; but he also noticed that there were no gloves on the red-brown hands, and the rough gray suit suggested the country store where its brothers in all sizes lay piled upon the counter.

Peyton would have thought it caddish in a man to criticise the clothes of his guest; but he noticed these and other details which helped to form a general impression.

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Then, though Rogers' voice was pleasant, his pronunciation was Western. And Peyton had once said that he hated to listen to Western men, because the wheels of their voices didn't run smoothly. One could always hear the br-r-r.

Still, there was something in the face which commanded respect, and Peyton could not help admiring the quiet dignity of his manner as he accepted the offered chair, and spoke of his disappointment at having missed the operetta the previous evening.

Peyton replied with a conventionally complimentary speech about Mrs. Rogers' singing.

"My wife has told me of your kindness to her, Mr. Peyton, and I want to thank you."

Peyton found nothing to say, and Mr. Rogers continued:

"It was a great sacrifice for me to allow her to come here, but she was very anxious to study, and I at last consented. She

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thinks with me, however, that the experiment has lasted quite long enough, and we leave to-night for home. Mrs. Rogers wished me to say good-by for her, and to return the necklace you so kindly lent her for the play last night."

He spoke calmly and decidedly, but a deeper color came into his sun burned face as he put the little case into Peyton's hand.

The latter made a perfectly correct response, in spite of the shame, pity, sympathy, and real pain, which were striving for expression within him.

There is nothing stronger than the strength of conventionality when it is habitual.

"I suppose Mrs. Rogers is quite occupied—if you are leaving to-night?" he asked as Rogers said good-by.

"Yes, she is very busy."

"Then perhaps you will say good-by to her for me—and tell her how sorry I am not to see her?"

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"I will."

And the two men shook hands again.  
What a ridiculous custom it is!

So the Burne-Jones went back into the rustic frame where she belonged. And the little world that had admired and criticised and gossiped forgot all about her.

Or was there one who remembered? For a time—yes. But it is so easy to forget—and there is always Paris—that haven for heart-broken Americans and dress-makers.

Otis Peyton stopped on the other side for two years.

When he returned he brought with him a beautiful head by Burne-Jones which hangs in his den, and which Padroni insists resembles his lost pupil.

"That Mrs. Rogairs—you remember her—do you not? She sent me last week a picture of her boy. She says she sings now for him only—bah!—women are like that."

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And he shook his head mournfully.  
But Peyton did not reply. He stood  
with his back to Padroni, looking at the  
Burne-Jones head.

Kismet



## KISMET.

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ALTHOUGH He arrived a little late, he was aware that the prize of the waiting group rested her hand lightly upon his arm as they went in to dinner.

He observed that She wore mauve and violets, also when She turned to speak to the Man on Her Left that the long curve from her small ear to the lace flounce on her shoulder was very beautiful. Then, as it was past his usual hour for dining, He devoured his oysters.

When a moment later She turned toward Him, She said gravely, "I see that you and I are cherishing the same secret in our bosoms." Then, as He looked puzzled, "We are both hungry," She added with a glance at his plate. "Confidentially, I am starving."

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To which He facetiously replied that in spite of his efforts He believed He had not become an oyster, and that He would endeavor to ward off public suspicion of her secret by a one-sided conversation while She stilled the first pangs.

"Only give me a theme," He said, turning in his high-backed chair and bending slightly toward her.

"Oh, talk about *bears—wolves—anything!*" She replied, making a little stab at an obstinate oyster that was foolish enough to resist being carried to her lips.

He laughed.

"Wouldn't a very hungry dog do?"

"Yes. If he were very, *very* hungry."

"Well—let me see" (He was beginning to be amused)—"Once there was a dog named—a—Goliath—"

"Oh, yes," She interrupted, "I read Mr. Aldrich's story about him. Wasn't it deliciously funny? I tried to read it to some of papa's cronies and quite disgraced myself laughing. But the idea of a great

man being afraid of dogs," and her lip curled scornfully.

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"Oh, I am not sure that it is so preposterous. Why shouldn't a man have an aversion for dogs just as women have for mice."

"How absurd! A mouse is a—a *beast*. A—a wretched beast. One never knows which way it is going to run."

"And one may always be reasonably sure which way a malevolent dog will run," He said quizzically.

"But the idea of comparing dogs and mice! Now Burns compares mice and men—but *dogs*! Who was it that said 'The more I see of men the better I like dogs'?"

He laughed.

"Some Englishman, I suppose. Our love for animals is copied from the English. You women care for dogs because it is the fashion in London. We men——"

"What heresy!" She exclaimed. "The American Eagle will swoop down and fly away with you."

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"I wouldn't mind flying away with a certain variety of eagles," He replied. "Nevertheless, it is true. Englishmen are much fonder of their dogs and horses than we are. We haven't time to study them. We only have a bowing acquaintance with animals, except this particular eagle I speak of, which every man wants to carry in his pocket."

"Oh, we have time to love dogs and horses——"

"We are beginning to—a few of us. But as it takes three generations to make a gentleman, so it takes generations of dog-fanciers to make a genuine dog-lover. Real love and appreciation of animals is a cultivated taste."

"Perhaps you may be right," She mused, "in saying that the average American hasn't time to really care for dogs, just as he hasn't time to really care for his family or anything but his business. He looks forward to the day when he can give up working—when he will be rich enough to

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stop and allow himself a taste of the luxuries of life that his wealth can buy. But when that time comes (if it does come) he is like a poor car-horse I saw on Broadway once that was being turned into the stables for rest, but got away from the hostler and jogged along the car-track from sheer force of habit. A man cannot throw off the habits of a life-time like an old coat. He can only throw them off with his body. And even then I sometimes think his soul goes on speculating in the same routine."

He could not help thinking how charming She was with the flush of argument in her cheeks and earnestness burning in her blue eyes.

"Yes," She went on, "I suppose you are right. We haven't time—most of us. No time to show it, but still don't you think the love of animals is there latent? It isn't that England has set the fashion, but that we are beginning to take breathing time—some of us."

"Perhaps," He suggested, "there are

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some whose breathing is all the more labored because of our rest."

She frowned in silence, and He went on:

"However, the question of love for animals is, I think, more one of race. Remember the infusion of Celtic blood in our veins. It was the good old Saxon who loved his horse and dog. The French? Well, they make use of horses and cry 'Canaille' to the vilest of their vile."

"That is true," She began, "but——"

The Man on Her Left asked a question which drew her into a conversation in that quarter, and again He was obliged to content himself with the curve of her shoulder and an entrée. As his hunger was appeased he took little interest in the latter while the former seemed to have grown in beauty. A vague desire to choke the Man on Her Left was beginning to take possession of him, when She turned with a half-smile and took up the thread of the conversation with the same grace that She

lifted her fork and toyed with the entrée before her.

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"I was going to tell you of a little incident that happened to me in the mountains last summer," She said. "It made me think of the very subject we were speaking about. I was riding Kismet—my horse. A love of a horse. We understand one another thoroughly. I tell her she is Fate and I am Chance. Sometimes I let her take her own way at her own speed, and once in this wild way——"

She paused and blushed vividly—then added with a smile which He found charming,

"But, as Mr. Kipling says, 'That's another story.' Am I too garrulous?"

"No—no. Go on," he said eagerly.

"Well, I was riding Kismet. It was a hot day and the road was steep. We had come fast and far. So as I was not in the least tired and we were only half a mile from my brother's mine, where we were going all alone, I jumped down and walked

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so that I might talk into her face. Dear old Kismet! We were plodding along in this fashion when a miner met us. He pulled his forelock and said curiously, 'No offence, Miss, but ben't you English?' 'No,' I replied, thinking it a compliment to the cut of my habit, 'I am American! Why do you ask?' 'Waal,' he answered, 'I never see no American git off to ease up a horse before. It's them English that thinks such a powerful sight of crit-turs.' "

He laughed at her perfect mimicry.

"There is a world of wisdom in those old miners. They seem to dig their philosophy from Mother Earth. And didn't that convince you of the truth of my theory?"

"No," She shook her head, "for I am thoroughly American, and yet I love Kismet and Spartan—my bull-dog."

"There is a little story—a relic of my own Western experience—which might interest you, even though as a stanch Amer-

ican you were unwilling to yield the palm of animal-loving to England."

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"Tell it," She said simply.

"I went West for some shooting, and met him out there. I know his name perfectly, but just now it evades me. He was the finest specimen of manhood that I ever saw. Pure Saxon—with that fluffy gold hair that didn't make him the least effeminate—blue eyes that looked straight through you, and a body like a young Roman gladiator. Perfectly fearless—light-hearted—ready for anything from a free fight to a ball at the club. He was amusing himself at Colorado Springs when I met him. The crack player on the Polo team—he had learned in India—great man at racquets, good dancer—rattling good shot and—"

He stopped abruptly. Something in Her face made Him conscious of his own enthusiasm.

"Go on. This is wildly interesting," She cried. "We have talked of animals

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all through dinner—we will finish with this ‘Paragon of animals.’ ”

“ I am boring you.”

“ Oh, please!” she begged, “ you are not, indeed. I love to hear one man praise another.”

“ Well, you couldn’t have helped liking him. But I will spare you my enthusiasm as much as possible.

“ He joined our little party. We went over the range for ten days’ shooting. They were heavenly—those days—Jove! I can almost see those forests of flaming red and yellow! It was September and the nights were cold, but the days—crisp and clear! There I go again into rhapsodies. Please stop the next fit when you see it coming.

“ Chetwynde and I—that’s his name—Chetwynde—Regy Chetwynde. A regular English name that. We were together for three days in a way that is sure to make men friends or enemies. We became friends. I found him even more attrac-

tive in camp than in civilization. He never jarred on one's mood. He seemed to know just when to sing a jolly good song (and jolly well he always sang it too) and when to sit smoking his pipe in the warm sun at noon, dreaming away an hour without a word.

"Sometimes he turned *chef*, and tossed pancakes for us over the fire in the cook's long-handled pan till we were tired of eating. At night we would roll up in our blankets beside the blazing pine boughs, and watch the sparks go up until the intense darkness seemed to extinguish them. Then we would talk, and he would tell little sketchy stories about India, and his life there. There was something about him that made one interested in all he said. He put a personality—an individuality—into every dog or horse that he mentioned."

"And was that all he cared for?" She interrupted. "Was there no woman whom he held 'a little better than his dog, a little

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dearer than his horse'? Was there no loving maid at home for this beautiful Saxon of yours? Didn't he tell you of his conquests? He must have made many."

"I never heard him mention a woman's name. In fact, I remember the only time your sex was the topic of conversation—a very racy little story was told by one of the party, to which he hardly seemed to listen. He sat staring into the fire, and looked bored, I thought. No—I do not think he was a man to care for women——"

"You speak of him in the past. *Was*—you say. Surely he is living—your hero?"

"Are you so anxious for the end of the story? Well, it is *nearly* finished. I almost forgot it in the memories of those delicious days—— But I will keep myself in hand now and tell you the incident.

"When we broke camp, Chetwynde and I started down together in advance of the others. I had a wretched mount, but his horse—Kitty or Kissy, he called her—was a superb creature. He was always strok-

ing her neck or patting her flank or whispering in her ear. I liked to watch him. It was almost like the devotion of a lover.

"When we came to the river which we had so easily forded a few days before, we found it so swollen and angry that riding across or even swimming would be impossible. Just above the ford there was an old ferry constructed by miners the previous spring. A most primitive affair—a raft with an endless rope attached, and brought around a tree on either side. Even with the aid of poles it was no easy task to pull across in this fashion. The raft was too small for the horses, and, besides, too unsteady; so we unsaddled them and fastened them securely in the rear. Then with our united strength we pulled until the veins stood out on our foreheads. Just as we reached the middle of the stream I heard a strange cry. We both turned. It was Chetwynde's horse. She had broken loose from the raft and was being carried down-

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stream, unable to swim in the current. The poor beast turned her head toward us and whinnied. One pathetic little cry, asking plainly for help—like a child or a woman. Before I could speak Chetwynde dashed off his coat. I saw what he was about to do, and tried to hold him. I knew the water was like ice—that he couldn't live in such a torrent. I tried to reason with him, but he tossed me aside just as he had his coat, and sprang into the river. I saw him disappear and rise a few yards away—shake the water from his hair, and strike out for the horse. I groaned aloud—powerless to do anything. In my anxiety to be nearer I managed (I scarcely know how) to pull the raft to the other side—release my poor shivering beast—snatch the coil of rope from my saddle and run down stream. When I came up with them they were together—horse and man. Chetwynde's cries of encouragement came ringing above the roar of the waters. For a while the horse seemed to regain strength,

and together they struggled a few strokes nearer the shore. I kept parallel to them, and flung my rope again and again without success. All their efforts seemed only to keep them out of the swiftest current, where they were likely to be dashed against rocks, which were numerous farther down stream. Chetwynde knew this and worked desperately for the shore—but all his strength and all the horse's strength only retarded their course downward—they did not advance an inch. Chetwynde's cries grew fainter and fainter. All his might was centred in that right arm. With his left he held the horse's bridle. It seemed that death was inevitable. I shouted and begged him to let the horse go. He might still save himself if he could only catch the rope. But he did not hear or would not. Hours seemed to pass. The rest of the party had crossed and were adding their shouts and prayers to mine—all unavailingly. At last by some miracle the noose went over Chetwynde's head. He

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caught hold of it—put himself through it and, heaven knows how, fastened the animal which he still held with his left hand—keeping his head above water with the right.

"We pulled them in with an effort that made it evident what their fight for life had been.

"He was in that icy water thirty minutes. It would have been immediate death to a man in less perfect condition. As it was, Death had laid a finger on him.

"'Look out for Kissy,' he gasped as we pulled him ashore. 'She isn't—my—horse!' Then he fainted.

"He had given his life for a horse—and a borrowed horse—this splendid Englishman."

He paused in his narrative and noticed how pale She had grown. Her eyes looked into his with a deep earnestness showing how thoroughly She had forgotten Herself and her surroundings in the absorbing in-

terest of his story. *His* story. He felt that He must have told it well, and a sense of self-satisfaction warmed his blood more than the champagne which he had almost neglected.

"And then?" She whispered.

He sighed. "Then he had pneumonia. We took him at once to Glenwood Springs. There I found a telegram calling me to New York. I thought I should never see Chetwynde again and I hated to leave him, but he had friends there—older friends than I—and besides I had to go. However I did see him—*here*, two months later. What a wreck! He had just recovered. Recovered—from pneumonia, I mean. But his lungs were seriously affected, and I doubt if he will ever be well again. Heavens! When I saw the poor chap it was all I could do to keep from crying like a baby. He was very cheerful though. Consumptives are all like that. He wrote me once or twice—the most sanguine sort of letters—but it has been a long time

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since I heard. I hope he isn't much worse, poor fellow."

The women were about leaving the room. She said hurriedly:

"I thank you for your story. It has interested me more than anything I have heard in New York. But what became of the horse?"

"The horse was returned to the owner in good condition, you may be sure."

"And the owner?"

"I never knew who owned her—but she was a beautiful animal."

The hostess had risen.

As *She* left the table She turned to Him (and again He became conscious of the beautiful curve of her shoulder).

"It was *my* horse," She said in a low voice—and then with a dazzling smile—"My *Kismet*."

Talk of politics, of silver, of Reading stock, rose with the smoke above the coffee and liqueurs, but, though He chatted affa-

bly enough, the words, "It was my horse—my *Kismet*," soared through it all in his brain. Gradually the sense of self-gratification gave place to chagrin and dull disappointment. He felt that in some way he had been cheated.

He was hardly surprised, therefore, when later in the drawing-room his chatty little hostess greeted him with,

"Now, don't tell me you've fallen in love with Miss Randolph, for she's to be married next month—to an Englishman."

"A consumptive?" He ventured dryly.

"A consumptive!" she echoed in derision, "Regy Chetwynde consumptive? What an idea! To be sure he was rather seedy last autumn after having pneumonia, but if you could have seen him at polo in February—"

She broke off to speed a parting guest, and He only heard "Kismet—my *Kismet*."

"Miss Randolph," He said, bowing before her as he took his leave, "I wish to acknowledge myself worsted in our dis-

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cussion of animal-lovers at dinner. I am quite sure that under the circumstances a Frenchman or even an American would willingly have risked his life for *Kismet*—and *such a fate*."

She laughed and blushed as She thanked Him.

"If you come to Colorado this summer you shall ride Kismet."

He bowed over her hand and said,  
"Good night."

As the man in the hall helped Him into his coat, a figure in mauve and violets came into his range of vision through the parted portière. She was saying good night.

He looked regretfully at the small ear and the long curve to the lace flounce on her shoulder. Then with a short laugh He went out.

"Kismet," He said to himself as the door closed behind him.

**H**uman Sunshine



## HUMAN SUNSHINE.

---

"**I**F I could just paint that."

He rubbed the canvas with his thumb—then threw back his head and gazed at her with half-closed eyes, as artists love to do.

The sunshine fell upon the white porch, upon the white sweet honeysuckle that climbed over it, and upon her white gown, where she sat on a rustic bench and leaned laughing against a pillar.

The breeze just stirred her brown hair—burnished gold in the sun—and swayed the honeysuckle bells to and fro, gently shaking out their fragrance on the warm air.

"If I could just paint that laugh," he repeated. "Some one has called laughter

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human sunshine. That laugh of yours ought to be in the picture. It belongs——”

She laughed again.

“Paint it!” she cried. “I can pose my laugh if you keep on being ridiculous. It *shall* be in the picture.”

Around on the other side of the house, in the shade, a group of men and women sat chatting idly. Some one was narrating the plot of a French novel. The others listened, or pretended to listen, while gazing out across the river at the foot of the hill, dreamily occupied with their own thoughts.

When the story was finished a general discussion followed, which drifted into that old worn subject, ever new—ever sweet to human hearts—Love.

There was not one in the party who was younger than five-and-forty, and who had not talked on this subject a thousand times, and yet it aroused new interest.

The old man, who had been planning that

an English syndicate should buy out his corporate company, took the cigar from his lips and listened. A married woman looked over at her husband and sighed gently. The husband gazed at the deep blue that seemed concentrated about the topmost tufts of the pine trees—but he was attentive.

It is strange what a hold it has upon us—how we like to believe in it—how we love to watch it spring up in young hearts, however bitter its lesson to us may have been. The human heart never loses faith in Love.

What is it? Does it mean the same thing to every one? Does Love, *die Liebe, l'Amour*, stir the hearts of three nations in the same way? Is it a real thing? We often hear that it is a dream—an hallucination. Yet, here were eight people whom it still charmed. Eight people, the stories of whose lives were told. They had lived, loved, and been loved—perhaps some still loved—who knows? If they

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could have stripped their souls of vanity, falsehood and pride, and one could have seen what love really meant to them!

One by one they joined in the conversation, and each added a remark which stood for an opinion, even if it were not one.

"There is no such thing as the love of poets and novelists," said one. "Love is really only a period in physical growth. All this talk about the heart——"

"The Greeks said that the liver was the seat of the affections. Call it the liver if you prefer. I have even had it in my knees so that I could not stand up," interrupted another.

"If you fell on your knees, that answered the purpose, I suppose."

"No, it didn't, and *she* answered——" He broke off with a shrug.

"That goes to prove the old French saying in which I so firmly believe, that in love there is always one who kisses and one who offers the cheek."

"Oh, what a miserable theory!" cried a

woman who possessed three marriageable daughters.

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"Then the question arises, which is the happier—the one who kisses, or the one who offers the cheek?"

"Oh, the one who offers the cheek, by all means," cried an unmarried woman impulsively, "for he never knows the pain of unrequited love—as they call it," she added with a forced laugh, and looked down at the river.

"And I say he who kisses is the happier because he knows the joy of loving—the greatest gift on earth. You know Tennyson says: "'Tis better to have loved and lost—'"

"Oh, I am sick of that quotation!" said the married man, removing his gaze from the pine trees for the first time. "And what a lot of old fools we are to sit here talking about such nonsense!"

Then they all laughed sheepishly and agreed that it was nonsense. At least they said so. But in their hearts did they

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think it the sweetest nonsense in the world,—or had they forgotten,—or is it only a disease of youth?

Around in the sun the painter still painted. The young girl still sat on the rustic bench, filling the air now and then with the human sunshine of her laughter.

"And then—and then," he said, looking at her in a preoccupied way, as he took out another brush.

"Go on."

"The princess always wore white, you know, and her hair was gold——"

"But you said it was brown just now," she pouted.

"Gold in the sun," he continued, touching the hair in the picture with his brush. "She was the most beautiful princess in the country. In fact, there was no other princess——"

"Oh!"

"To compare with her, of course."

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She laughed softly.

"And did I mention that when she laughed her teeth were like pearls, her mouth like—— What are you screwing your mouth up like that for? Do you want me to paint it that way? There—that is better. But the saddest thing about the princess was this. She was in love with an artist—and a *poor* artist."

"*What?*"

"Yes, desperately in love with him."

"Why, what a *story!*"

"Yes, a sad story. To be sure, she couldn't help it. He was born fascinating—and handsome."

She reached up for a handful of honeysuckle and flung it at him, laughing.

"Stop," she cried. "It isn't true."

"Now whose story *is* this, yours or mine?" he said, fastening the flowers to the lapel of his coat.

"Well, it isn't at all a nice story."

"But wait until it is finished. So this handsome and fascinating artist, when he

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saw that the princess was really in love with him——”

“She was only pretending all the time, you know,” she interrupted.

He made two or three swift strokes with his brush.

“Didn’t she really love him?” he asked.

“No—no—no,” she cried.

“Not even when she found his heart was breaking for her?”

“No—no!”

He worked in silence for a minute.  
“Well, when the painter discovered that, he took his hat and——”

“Jumped into ‘the river,’ ” she suggested.

“No—painted the town.”

Again she laughed, and he put in the last touches.

“Come and look at the princess,” he said.

She came and put her hand on his shoulder while she looked.

He laid it against his lips.

"Is that the lady who loved the handsome and fascinating artist?"

"I think he would really throw himself into the river if she didn't," he said gently.

"Well, she looks very silly laughing there—silly enough to love you."

"She is very beautiful."

"That is nice," and she gave his head a little pat. "But you haven't put your name in."

He began to make letters in the corner.

"I—I-o-v—" she read. "Oh, how silly, Horace!" and she laughed so merrily that he laughed too as he caught her in his arms and——

Yes, it is nonsense. But such delicious nonsense! The nonsense of youth, and health, and happiness.

How sweet it is! Let us hold it while we may. There are so many shadows in life—let us cherish this human sunshine.



Aunt Charlotte



## AUNT CHARLOTTE.

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Aunt  
Charlotte.

HE called her "Aunt Charlotte" because Jean was his adopted cousin, and she called him "Connie" because Jean did.

"You shall be my cousin and I shall call you Connie," Jean had said in a fit of gratitude for the polo pony which he had broken for her use. And only he and the pony knew how hardly earned was the gratitude.

So although he had been christened Charles Arthur Conleigh, "Connie" he became to Jean, to Mrs. Farnham, and even to The Lamb, when he was there.

The Lamb was a good-natured, rather ceremonious individual of fifty-five,—stoutly important, thoroughly engrossed in business, and Mrs. Farnham's husband.

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It was in this order that the characteristics of Dexter Farnham, Esq., impressed themselves upon his wife's friends—among whom he was commonly known as The Lamb. He was fond of his wife—treated her as he did Jean, and appeared to like her patronizing though affectionate manner toward him. He was proud of her as he had been proud of his favorite race-horse twenty years earlier. She was his property, and he liked to have her admired. Consequently, though he seldom went out of his New York house except to the Clubs, he encouraged her to indulge in society. She needed little encouragement, and indulged to an extent that was beginning to be wearisome, when Jean became ill.

"We are a trio," she said to Conleigh that first afternoon on the polo field, "who have come to Colorado in quest of health, wealth, and reputation. Little Jean has been out of sorts ever since that attack of pneumonia, The Lamb is about to retrieve

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his impoverished fortune, and I am cultivating a character. It goes so well with wrinkles, you know, and I assure you one's character needs patching up after—shall I say how many New York seasons?"

And she looked at Conleigh from the corners of narrow gray eyes that knew their own fascination. She was past thirty, though she might have been two-and-twenty. She possessed a slender, graceful figure and a detailed knowledge of the world. She once said, "The world winked at me when I was born, and we have understood each other ever since." She also owned a clear, olive skin and dark hair, which was brushed straight back from the forehead.

Conleigh was particularly good-looking in his polo clothes. It was quite eight-and-twenty years after his christening day when his new title was bestowed upon him; and, though he had seen something of life in that time, he had never been in love according to his standard (all men have

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their standards for loving), and still took the world with an enthusiasm that was quite serious and unaffected. He had a happy disposition,—no very lofty ambitions, and enough money to live upon, as he said, "comfortably."

There is almost as much difference in people's ideas of comfort as there is in their ideas of God.

Conleigh's thoughts about the former were very pleasant. His real opinions of the latter he kept folded in an inside pocket of his brain.

He firmly believed in religion for servants and women, and would have been shocked had any one told him that he classed the two together. He preferred Catholicism for them, but also approved of the Church of England, to which he himself went oftener than most men.

He once told a friend that a woman without religion was a rose without perfume. Whereupon she (it was Aunt Charlotte) almost fell under his dis-

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approval for saying that it was *something* just to be a rose.

Then she laughed and put one in the buttonhole of his coat, and they talked about the pigeon-shoot, and he told himself that she was the most attractive woman he had seen.

To Conleigh living in Colorado was originally the result of a fever contracted in Rome, shortly after his Harvard days, clinched by a New York winter. So he took Horace Greeley's advice, and his valet, and went West.

He preferred living in Colorado Springs to dying anywhere else. Afterward he preferred it to *living* anywhere else. So he built a stable for his polo ponies, and what he called a "little box" on Cascade Avenue, which he caused to be the envy and admiration of all good housekeepers.

When his sister wrote that her old friend Charlotte Rodney Farnham (one of "*the Rodneys*") was going to Colorado, she only said, "You will be nice to her at first for

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my sake, Charlie dear, *et après*. No, I shall not predict, for I am really too uncanny that way. But don't forget me entirely in your friendship—if she *is* fascinating."

He went to see her, but she was not at home, and he met her for the first time with the Hodges after a polo game.

He gave the ponies to his groom, got into a fur overcoat and walked home with her.

"But I saw you," she said when he spoke of his vain attempt to see her. "I was behind the door on a step-ladder in an agony of terror lest the Agnostic who prevails in our kitchen should let you come in. I had sent Julie on an errand."

"On a step-ladder!"

"Yes, setting up a household divinity. Oh! Mr. Conleigh, Bessie said I might make use of you. Do you mind being made use of?"

"On the contrary it would be a delicious novelty. One grows so indolent here."

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"How odd! I have been feeling particularly energetic since I came. The air is enchanting."

"Yes, it is enchanting. That is exactly it. One grows to love it—and to long for a breath of it. A friend of mine calls it the 'Colorado Air Habit,' and declares that there is a gold cure for it. That is, that the only thing to keep a fellow from becoming good-for-nothing out here is to go in for mining."

"Do you?"

"Oh, no. I prefer being good-for-nothing. You will see how easy it is presently. It is like the land the Lotos-Eaters came to, where it 'seemèd always afternoon.' "

"Why are we weighed upon with heaviness  
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,  
When all things else have rest from weariness?"

She murmured.

"That is our code—mental and physical."

"And moral?"

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He laughed.

"Oh, we are very moral! We look out for each others' faults."

"And gossip?"

"Of course."

"Then it is no better than New York."

"Oh, yes; we gossip much better. It is our one fine art. In New York you have no idea to what an extent gossiping may be carried. You only have scandals, while we—we gossip about the bonnets and boots of our neighbors—and last year there was quite a talk because the stripe in Bolton's trousers was a shade too wide."

"Then this is not a particularly good place to come to for a character?"

"No—but it is a splendid place for wrinkles."

"Oh, I shall go home at once."

"Please don't, Mrs. Farnham. You have a mission here—to make me useful. Perhaps you can lead me back to the paths of righteousness. I never read—I never even think any more. None of us do."

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We get into a rut—and then we get satisfied with the rut, and there we stay—even forgetting everything we ever did know."

"Uncle Esek says: "Tain't wot a man don't learn, it's wot he forgits makes him so ignorant"—and I am forgetting that I must see about a cook. The aforesaid Agnostic departed this morning on a mysterious errand of her own, and I feel as though 'all the world were water, and all the water were ink.' "

Conleigh laughed.

"Let me send in some 'bread and cheese and drink' then." Did you know I lived next door?"

"No, in that dear little house?"

"I am glad its exterior pleases you, and hope you will like its contents. They are at your disposal."

She looked at him and laughed curiously. "Thank you, I think I shall like it. Houses are a good deal like people. You can generally tell whether they are fur-

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nished throughout by an upholsterer, or whether there are original, interesting bits."

He smiled.

" You will find a great many people here whose brains are job-lots as it were. They think in sets. Two arm-chairs, a sofa and centre-table. They never have any unique or beautiful thoughts."

They were walking home and had reached his gate. She looked at the house and then at him.

" I am glad that the nearest house is not furnished throughout by an upholsterer. Will you let me come in and rest my eyes now and then until our worldly goods arrive, and I can banish some of the atrocities of my ready-furnished house?"

" Please do. And may I come in now and then and relieve my mind after seeing some of the atrocities of the ready-furnished brains hereabouts?"

She laughed.

" Please do."

And so they were friends from the first hour.

Conleigh made himself very useful during the following weeks. As Mrs. Farnham said: "For anything from a cook to a corner I go to my next neighbor."

He made friends with little Jean, and put The Lamb up at the Club whenever he was in town.

If Mrs. Farnham came to Colorado Springs for a character, she sought it in Conleigh's society.

The bubble reputation is far more easily found in the cannon's mouth than in the mouths of idle women—particularly if the seeker be a woman—and a beautiful woman with a man in polo clothes at her heels.

Mrs. Farnham ignored these facts.

She once told Conleigh that all facts were disagreeable except the Colorado weather, and sometimes even that was bad—and went on her way rejoicing.

Aunt Charlotte.

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Charlotte.

Her way soon became Conleigh's way, and he also rejoiced. The Lamb was in Arizona, and Little Jean, whom Mrs. Farnham called the chaperon, hardly interfered with their conversation, though she invariably accompanied them.

They called her "Little Jean," for she bore her thirteen years timidly, and was a slender girl. Mrs. Farnham declared that Jean had never quite approved of her. "And Heaven only knows what I would have been without her. Why, the very day she was born I said a swear-word about some medicine the doctor was trying to make me take, and Jean looked at me so reproachfully with those big blue eyes that I positively blushed. And I have never sworn since—except mentally."

But Jean really adored her mother, and her air of protecting affection was very pretty to behold.

One afternoon Conleigh found Mrs. Farnham kneeling before Jean, who had evidently been crying.

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"Come and scold me too, Connie. Or no, I think you had better take my part. I am very penitent, and Jean is to put me on bread-and-water for a week, if she will only forgive me."

"There is nothing to forgive, if you were only in fun."

"But I was not in fun. Connie, Jean has been corrupting her morals with the 'Elsie Books;' I am sure of it."

"What has Aunt Charlotte been doing, little girl?"

"It was only something she said to Mrs. Barton."

"I told Mrs. Barton that Jean's marriage was to retrieve the family fortunes. Nothing less than a duke will completely satisfy me. Here we are recuperating in purse, body, and mind, and when Jean is old enough I shall take her away and marry her to a nice rich old lord, or earl, or duke. Isn't that sensible? And Jean didn't like it."

Jean's face flushed.

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"You could never make me marry a man I did not love, mother," she said.

"Great heavens, child, what *have* you been reading? What do you know about love?"

Jean lifted her great serious eyes to Conleigh's.

"Connie, I believe she is in love with *you*!"

"Oh, mother!" the child cried, and ran out of the room.

"Why did you say that, Aunt Charlotte? —you have hurt the baby!"

Mrs. Farnham looked steadily into the fire. "I don't know. I wish I understood Jean. I feel like Frankenstein. Here she is—*mine*—my daughter with my mother's eyes—and yet a perfect monster of incomprehensibility to me. Sometimes I feel guilty for having brought her into the world. If she were at all like me I should hate her at times. But she is so different that I feel irresponsible—and yet what a responsibility a soul is! Where do you

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suppose her soul would be if her body had never been?"

He liked her dream-moods and let her go on uninterrupted—only sitting down beside her on the bear-rug before the fire.

"Perhaps in some poor, ragged, ill-fed little body. Do you believe so, Connie?"

"Perhaps," he said.

"And besides," she went on, "I suppose it is one's right,—but sometimes it seems rather a selfish pleasure to have children. To bring an innocent being into the world with all your own faults and all the faults of your great-grandparents stamped into them. And we look at them as though they were toys, or interesting puzzles, and wonder how they will come out—as we watch them struggling with the very difficulties we encountered. I suppose the Creator gets the same amusement out of us, only he has not had the fun of experiencing life himself."

She smiled quizzically.

"But they warm our hearts, Connie—

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these little ones. Mother-love is the only consolation I have for not having been born a man. You can never know the joy of it—the beauty of it," and she looked at him with shining eyes.

Then she went to console Jean, and presently the three charged down the Avenue like the Light Brigade, and "all the world wondered."

Aunt Charlotte rather liked to make the world wonder. She said it was one of her few innocent amusements, and she liked to encourage harmless pleasure. She contended that it was one's duty to give people something to talk about if their lives were stupid, just as one should give bread to those who have none. So she gave Colorado Springs a constant topic of conversation for two years—a topic that sprang eternal in the human mind long after the hope of an open scandal had ceased to spring.

Aunt Charlotte and Connie seemed to be the exception proving the rule against

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Platonic friendship—and nothing happened.

The three rode, drove, and walked together, hunted, fished, and dined together—often with others, but except in the Club, where Conleigh was occasionally to be found late at night, Mrs. Farnham, Jean, and he were almost always seen together.

During The Lamb's little visits the régime was quite unchanged, except that he sometimes rode with them on a meek-looking horse which Aunt Charlotte called "Mary."

And nothing happened. People talked and waited with bated breath in vain. Aunt Charlotte never did or said anything that could be criticised beyond the facts that they knew each other very well; that she called him Connie and treated him as a boy, and he called her Aunt Charlotte and treated her with admiring deference. Besides Aunt Charlotte understood women. And so few women really under-

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stand each other. They interested her and she studied them. She exerted herself quite as much for them as for men, and they liked her in spite of themselves. Moreover Conleigh had never been a woman's man, and as she was indifferent to general admiration, she robbed no one. So in the midst of all the gossip she planted a few strong friends about her.

During these days Conleigh tried not to think at all. He had never been so happy before. The spirit of content seemed to have settled upon him together with the old Lotos-Eater feeling. And he lived on from day to day, from month to month, from year to year, satisfied with the joy of mere living. Twice in two years he went East, but only for a flying visit.

Then came a heavenly day in spring. A day that reminded Conleigh of Egypt. A day that thrilled though all living fibres like wine.

Ah! how dare we talk lightly of the

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weather! How dare we use it to support our broken-backed conversations!

"You make me young again, Connie," she said. "I feel as though I had turned back in the book of my life to read over pages that had been skipped by mistake in the beginning. Please, Connie, this is Chapter Three, and I am just eighteen to-day."

It was her birthday. They were standing together on the porch of her cottage waiting for the horses to be brought around. Before them the intense blue of the sky was pricked by the white-topped mountains,—and on the other side plains, stretching away and away as though they knew no ending.

She was in one of her joyous moods, which was almost as becoming as her habit, Conleigh thought, and he had fallen into the way of telling her his thoughts.

"Thank you, Connie. You are doing very nicely. Eighteen likes compliments. Oh, can you realize that I am thirty-three

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to-day? I tried them both this morning and decided that thirty-three sounded younger than three-and-thirty. Thirty-three is final, while there are possibilities of infinite additions to three-and-thirty, and I tell you there are to be no additions. However, I must be a little sobered before we go,"—and she dashed into the house, returning with a volume of Matthew Arnold—"Read that."

So he read in his deep, magnetic voice, "What is it to grow old?"

"A grawsome thing," he pronounced it, and she looked at him with a smile.

"I read that every birthday to give me a realizing sense of what I am coming to; but there is evidently something wrong to-day. For the first time it hasn't a particle of effect. I didn't hear anything but your voice. You really have quite a nice voice, Connie."

Then Jean came, and they rode to the Garden of the Gods, because it was Aunt Charlotte's Sunday.

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Mrs. Farnham generously divided the Sundays of the year by two, taking half for herself, and half for Jean. "When she was a baby," she told Conleigh, "I didn't quite know what to do. I had gone through all the stages of religious sentiment until I arrived where I am now. I can't say what I *do* believe. I fear it is very little. You know Arthur Clough said, 'They are most hopeless who had once most hope, and most beliefless who had once believed.' But I didn't want to bias Jean, so I took her to church every other Sunday. Now she loves it, and takes me. The other Sundays are mine."

When they reached the Garden they tied their horses and went into a sheltered place they knew, which they called theirs by right of discovery.

Conleigh lighted a cigarette, Jean went off with the dogs, and Aunt Charlotte took her Matthew Arnold from the pocket of Conleigh's coat and began to read.

"We are too frivolous. You must have

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a Sunday poem," and she read aloud:  
"The Buried Life."

"Only—but this is rare—  
When a belovéd hand is laid in ours,  
When, jaded with the rush and glare  
Of the interminable hours,  
Our eyes can in another's eyes read clear,  
When our world-deafened ear  
Is by the tones of a loved voice caressed—  
A bolt is shot back somewhere in our breast,  
And a lost pulse of feeling stirs again.

• • •  
And then he thinks he knows  
The hills where his life rose,  
And the sea where it goes."

She leaned back against the red rock  
and looked up at the dazzling sky until her  
eyes filled with tears. Neither spoke.  
The sudden reaction from her gay mood  
was too much for her.

At last he took the book from her fingers  
gently. He dared not trust himself to the  
silence or to his own words, so he read  
aloud at random:

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"Each on his own strict line we move,  
And some find death ere they find love ;  
So far apart their lives are thrown  
From the twin soul which halves their own.

"And sometimes, by still harder fate,  
The lovers meet, but meet too late.  
—Thy heart is mine!—*True, true!* *Ah! true,*  
—Then, love, thy hand!"

His emotion suffocated him. He could not go on. Their eyes met. "Charlotte," he whispered, and covered her hand with kisses.

When the heart once commands, the lips speak words which sometimes surprise their owner.

In the next ten minutes Conleigh told Aunt Charlotte many, many things which he had never thought consciously before.

"Wait a minute," she said, "don't speak," and she closed her eyes. There was a half-smile on her lips, and her fingers tightened on his for an instant. Then she pressed them to her temples.

"After all, Connie dear," she said at

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last, "it is of no use—I am *not* eighteen. Think of living to be three-and-thirty and feeling this. Ah! I felt so safe—so safe. If I were eighteen—Oh, if I were. Then I used to look my life in the eyes, and ask it what it meant to do. Its eyes were wild and restless—and sometimes I was frightened. A loveless life is not possible for a woman. To be a woman is to love—if it is only one's self or excitement, and I was afraid—but Little Jean came and filled my heart and life. Oh, Connie, think of Little Jean!"

She rose to her feet and leaned against the rock.

"I am a very wicked woman to care for you, and to have allowed you to care for me. I am old enough to know better. I am so much older than you—whole lifetimes, Connie."

He rebelled at this, but she went on. "There are moments in life when a veil seems to fall and we see things as they really are. Only moments, 'and then he

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thinks he knows the hills where his life rose, and the sea where it goes.' Then comes the old puzzle and jumble of complexities again. This is one of those moments, Connie. There can be no doubt about the right and wrong of it. But it has been sweet, Connie, our friendship has been so sweet. Can't we go back to it? Can't we be just the same?"

All things are possible to him who loveth. So he assured her that they could be just the same, and kissed the hem of her riding-skirt in a way that was very attractive—conveying as it did unspoken volumes of respect, love, and tenderness.

There are as many tricks in love as there are in trade, and they are such pretty tricks.

It is hard to keep back words of love, but from one spoken word that might have been suppressed springs an army of emotions that cannot be conquered. And there were moments when the feeling of

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constraint between these two was so painful that she could have screamed.

However, there were also days when peace and good-fellowship were restored. Such happy days, when they rode all over the country together, and told each other their trifling thoughts, and delighted together in the liquid notes of the meadow lark, so common in Colorado, and so exquisite. They called it their bird. In fact everything beautiful belonged to them. They shared all nature generously with each other, and were divinely happy. There was not a fraction of a mountain—not a ray of sunshine—not a breath of fresh air left for the other people at the Springs that year. But then they did not know it, poor dears, and were quite reasonably happy for ordinary mortals.

But the moments of constraint came oftener, and Aunt Charlotte saw that it was the beginning of the end.

It was a year after the episode in the Garden of the Gods (Aunt Charlotte once

told herself that there was something uncanny about its happening there—"and Matthew Arnold was the apple," she added with a sigh). The Lamb had taken what Aunt Charlotte called a furlough, and Conleigh went with them to California. California was burning with flowers, and heavy with the perfume of orange-blossoms.

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"I can feel my soul going to sleep," Aunt Charlotte wrote to a friend; "I pinch it now and then, but it is quite intoxicated with these heavenly smells. You will never appreciate your nose until you come here."

But her soul did not quite go to sleep, and suddenly one day what she had expected happened. He said that he would go to Japan.

"After this you will be dead to me, Charlotte," he said; "I am going away to forget. You must forget. I told you we could be the same friends again, but that

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was madness. I never really knew what I felt for you until I told you that day. The words can never be taken back, and the feelings themselves were so nourished by those words that they are strong—stronger than I. You are right, I suppose—I think so in my sane moments. But a day will come when I cannot resist, and you—Ah! I am afraid——”

“I hoped I could keep you, Connie,” she said, “but it isn’t possible. No, you are right. Good-by.”

So he kissed her once gently upon the forehead as though she were indeed dead. Then once fiercely upon the lips—and went away.

It was nearly two years before he returned. Every mail brought a book or letter for Aunt Charlotte or Jean.

The two were more devoted and more dependent upon each other than ever. Mrs. Farnham was surprised at Jean’s development. She was wonderfully mature for her years. “Actually, Jean,” she said one

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day, "you are quite old enough to be my mother, and you look like her. She was a great beauty in her day. Ah me! but beauty is an expensive luxury."

A year is not a long time. But if at the close of one day we multiply the emotions we have felt by three hundred and sixty-five it seems an eternity, and we wonder that there is a trace of the old self left for the new year.

Jean was the first to greet Conleigh upon his return. He kissed her as a matter of course, and then grew rather embarrassed by her embarrassment, and the sudden realization that she was a woman—and a beautiful one. Then Aunt Charlotte came in.

"Is it the same old Connie?" she asked, putting a hand on his shoulder. He looked at her steadily, and then said with a tinge of reproach in his voice, "I hope not—altogether."

When a man has succeeded in conquering an unlawful love, it leaves him with

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an unacknowledged feeling of reproach toward the woman who inspired it. There is something in the height of his newly acquired and unwonted righteousness which makes him feel that he would not have fallen in the first place had not some one pushed him. Men cannot help this. It is an inexorable law of their being. Adam furnishes our first illustration—but there were surely countless generations of monkeys who experienced it before him.

During the following week Aunt Charlotte was quite occupied with young Stuyvesant, a remote cousin of hers, who was stopping with them for a few days on his way to California.

"A dear boy," she said to Conleigh, "who would be very nice for Jean in time if she would only fancy him."

But Jean did not fancy him, and Aunt Charlotte found that she was obliged to take charge of the "dear boy" herself. A most satisfactory arrangement for the boy,

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who worshipped her with an adoration that was very melodramatic and young.

In the mean time Conleigh and Jean rode and walked together. Conleigh did most of the talking, but she was a sympathetic and appreciative listener. She was not clever, but she possessed what men call tact and value more highly. Then she was very religious—honestly religious, and her soul was beautiful. Sometimes she instituted a mild reform, and Conleigh found himself delighted.

Is there anything, I wonder, that men of a certain age love better than to be reformed by a beautiful young girl?

The morning that Stuyvesant left, Aunt Charlotte went with them to their game of tennis, taking up her racket to help Jean. They played for some time, and then Conleigh declared that Jean must stop.

"You are not strong, child," he said, "and must not tire yourself." Then he wrapped his striped coat about her because

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the air was cool. "Come on, Aunt Charlotte," he cried. "*You're* not tired."

Aunt Charlotte was tired, but the indifference of his tone lashed her pride, and she played until he acknowledged himself beaten in body and spirit.

Then she locked herself in her room and cried "with exhaustion," she told herself. But after a while she went to the mirror and studied her face carefully.

"Women are like prize-fighters," she said at last. "They never know when they are too old for the ring,"— and she laughed with a tear in her eye.

That night Conleigh began the discussion of a book from the bear's head where he sat and poked the burning logs of fragrant piñon.

The fire-light flashed upon an interesting room, and half a dozen more or less interesting faces whose owners were taking coffee or smoking in comfortable easy-chairs. He addressed Aunt Charlotte, who looked particularly handsome in black

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evening dress, as she leaned among the cushions of a low divan in the light of a yellow-shaded lamp.

"But after all, Connie," she replied, lazily looking at him without turning her head, "do you think you could count the 'Dodos' you have known upon your two hands?"

"I hope I have never known one. I hate to think that there are women like that. 'Dodo' is a stupid book," he said, with a vicious poke at a refractory log.

"Oh, Mr. Conleigh!" cried a woman, "how can you say that?—the book is full of clever speeches."

"Clever speeches are not what a man wants in women."

"Oh, Connie is just like the rest of his sex, only more honest. Marriage is *one* thing and amusement is another—like the man to whom business was business, and religion, religion. Men want to marry their pink-and-white Ideals, and then when they are bored (which, alas! hap-

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pens soon) go out and call upon Brains for amusement. The Ideals stay at home and weep or perhaps pray, and that delights the Lords of the Manor for a while until it grows tiresome."

"But men are dropping all that sort of nonsense now," some one said.

"Not at all. Only very young men. They all have this Ideal. They are born with it, just as they are born with eyes. It is handed down from Adam. Why, even *he* complained of Eve's originality in suggesting the apple. As they grow older, the old Ideal, which has been sort of a veiled Isis in their bosom, suddenly drops her drapery, and there she stands pretty, pink, and pious."

"Ah! the lady grows alliterative in her enthusiasm."

Aunt Charlotte laughed softly.

"Oh!" she continued, "Connie will have to cure his imaginary lung in a hurry, and get out of Colorado before women take full possession of the ballot."

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"But this Dodo was not clever," some one said.

"She was amusing, and it is clever to be amusing. Can't you forgive a person anything if he or she is amusing? She was amusing and liked to be amused. Are any of us very different under the *well-dressed brains*, or under the pretty pink piety?"

Suddenly she sat erect and lifted her hand. "I wonder—if there be any lady or gentleman present who has any distinct, tangible aim in his or her life, let him speak now or else forever after hold his peace."

There was a moment's silence, then her musical laugh. "And yet we all believe that we have an aim beyond a pair of healthy lungs, a bag of gold, or mere amusement. I wonder if any of us really have."

"Oh, please, Aunt Charlotte, let's not be introspective," cried Conleigh. "I always imagine my soul as a sort of a cherub ar-

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rangement, with a face like a photograph of me when I was a baby, and white wings,—flying about on errands of mercy and goodness.” He dropped the poker and skipped about the room, flapping his arms, amid shouts of laughter.

“How would the cherub like a whiskey and Manitou?” suggested Aunt Charlotte.

The cherub capered madly. “Come then,” she said, rising. “We will eat, drink and be merry, and forget our aims. No, Jean,” she said in an entirely different voice, as the young girl rose from her seat in the shadow, “you are too young for Connie’s drinks. Stay here with your books.”

Jean looked rather disappointed, but turned obediently and sat down upon the bear’s head before the fire. She could hear the sound of voices, the clink of glasses, and peals of laughter from the dining-room. She wondered vaguely if this were life—if she could ever understand it. Just as she used to wonder as a

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child at school in New York, when she heard the older girls recite their lessons. Would she ever be clever enough to understand and enjoy it—or did they understand and enjoy it—or was it all a puzzle and tangle to them as it was to her? Did they only pretend? Did Connie only pretend?

Then she heard a step—*his* step, and her heart beat faster as Conleigh came into the room.

"Tell me what you are thinking, little girl," he said, throwing himself down on the rug at her feet. "Was I very frivolous, and are you shocked? What were you thinking of?"

"Of you,—I think," she said simply.

There was a pause. Then he said, "Do you remember the story I used to tell you, when you were very little, about Beauty and the Beast?"

"And how you used to dress up in this very bear rug to show me how the poor Prince looked," she said.

"Yes, and you were always so sorry for him. You know she had to say that she loved him in all his hideousness."

"And then he became a beautiful prince," Jean said dreamily.

"That was because she loved him, you know. Love will do a great deal, Jean. If you loved me I believe I could be very good."

"I *do* love you, Connie."

He kissed her hand.

He felt that he was gambling for happiness with stakes that were not quite his own, but he played them to win—and wildly. He *would* be happy. Why should he not be? Even then vague visions of a home and children of his own floated before his eyes. For there is a time in the lives of men when they desire these things.

"Do you love me enough to make me young again—and take away all the scars—all the scars, Jean?" and he laid her hand on his forehead.

"I always have loved you, Connie dear, and I would die for your happiness."

Aunt Charlotte.

Then he told her to *live* for his happiness, and she did not know (and he forgot) how very hackneyed the old phrases were.

The cynical old world turned wearily on its side and winked at the stars. Surely the universe has a sense of humor to keep it going.

"You make me young again," he murmured, and kissed the edge of her skirt.

Aunt Charlotte heard those words and saw that gesture as she came into the room, and she thought her heart had turned to stone.

"Jean loves me, Aunt Charlotte," Conleigh said. "God knows I am unworthy of her, but will you trust her to me?"

Aunt Charlotte grasped the portière. "This is very sudden—Jean is such a baby—and *you*—are you sure——"

"I love her with all the love there is left to me. I am not without scars, and

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yet I am not too old to begin a new life."

"Mother," cried Jean, "say you are not angry. Say you are glad. You love Connie, don't you?"

"It may be that *I* am not too old to begin a new life," she said enigmatically. "But you are all I have, Jean"—her voice faltered. "Still, we will talk it over. You must wait a long while and consult The Lamb—your *Father*"—she corrected.

That night she sat for hours before her fire. "I must burn my thoughts," she said to herself. "There were no silly letters or faded flowers. There was really very little nonsense—but I must burn all the old thoughts of him."

Then one by one she cast them metaphorically into the flame: How he looked that first day on the polo field. His funny expression the day they made the cake together in camp. Certain of his ideas that she had adopted. Certain rides, walks,

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and talks. That day in the Garden of the Gods. How he looked when he kissed the hem of her riding-skirt. "Ah! he need not have done *that* again. He might have left me that," she cried. Then she consigned that thought to the fire.

"After all, I hope he will be happy. Why shouldn't he be happy—and Jean—Ah! Jean loves him too," and something like peace came to soothe her sense of desperation and loneliness.

Her first great longing after the shock had been for love, and for a moment her thoughts turned to the wild devotion of the remote young cousin. But she scorned this the next instant.

"I suppose there are women silly enough for that, even if they are no worse than I. After all the punishment is just. I might have stopped it in the beginning, but it grew strong and dangerous, and then I did just have strength enough—Ah! but it was a chance—a toss-up. If women could only know. If I could only tell them

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all and warn them. Love is a dagger to play with—and how it cuts. Yes, the punishment is just and sure.

Once in the night she laughed a laugh that was shaken with sobs as she said—“As it is I suppose it is only funny—Some one must be amused—I am quite sure that I shall be amused—to-morrow.”

And the letter to her husband on her dressing-table the next morning ended: “So come back, dear. You have been away too long, and I want you. I think we are ready to grow old together.

A Chance Shot



## A CHANCE SHOT.

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WOODBURY was a follower and an ardent admirer of the pseudo-realistic school of Fiction—the Franco-American school, claiming Zola for its father—though it is doubtful whether the august parent would recognize his offspring, however skilful the translating and transplanting hand.

The follower and ardent admirer sat writing at a desk in a room which was a studio, music-room, and library combined, judging from its litter of books, music, and half-finished sketches. The sketches, by the way, were dreary affairs, half veiled in gray mist scenes that made one wish the fog were denser. And the elderly gentleman who had been examining them one

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by one looked as though he wished so devoutly.

A near-sighted man in gold-rimmed spectacles was struggling with "Walter's Prize Song" at the piano.

And still the scribbler scribbled. Some of his iconoclastic poems and short stories had already appeared in the magazines. He was a handsome fellow, although the pessimism which he had affected for several years was beginning to tell upon him visibly by drawing little hard lines about his lips, and by adding a certain flintiness of expression to his eyes, under the languid indifference of the drooping eyelids.

At last the musician wearied:

"How much longer do you intend to be at that, Woodbury?" he said, consulting his watch; "you've had time enough to write an epic."

"Time!" ejaculated the other, as with his pen between his teeth, he sought for a stamp—"Time! You left me no time at all. You've been murdering it at the

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piano." And he began to address an envelope.

"Well, what is it about to-day? May I read it?"

Woodbury nodded. "If you like," he said.

His friend took the paper to the window and, holding it quite close to the gold-rimmed spectacles, read:

When the sweet child's dream of a Heaven is  
gone

With the childish nightmare of Hell;—

When over the future a veil is drawn,

And over the past as well;—

Can the good that we loved for our dear God's  
sake,

And the pleasures we shunned as sin,

Be the same, since Heaven is *not* the stake

We are playing so wildly to win?

Are we sure that our "evil" is not the "good,"

And that "good" is not "evil" too?

Is it wrong to yield to a sweet mad mood

That comes uninvited to you?

Is youth an outlaw that we must bind?

Is Nature a wicked sprite,

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Imposing a curse on all mankind  
By making a wrong seem right?

Perhaps in old age when the pulse is slow,  
And temptation has flown with youth,  
We can look far back on this time, and know  
The right from the wrong in truth.

Without a word he returned and placed  
the sheet on the table.

"Well?" said Woodbury quietly as he  
folded it to fit the envelope.

"Do you think any magazine will take  
that?"

"I hope so. Don't you like it?"

"It is utter rot."

Woodbury laughed indulgently, showing  
his beautiful white teeth as he did so.  
"Oh, come now," he said languidly, "re-  
member you're an Evangelist,—a Humani-  
tarian,—an Ethical Culturist,—a what-  
you-call-'em—Mahatma, a—Heaven knows  
what not. My dear Jenks, you are, in  
spite of all your spiritual advancement, a  
little *old fogey*. It is *Nature* that the world

wants now. Nature as she *is*—not as we would like her."

Jenks waited a moment with compressed lips. Then he said: "You know what I mean, Woodbury. That thing is wrong from beginning to end. What will a man amount to who allows his nature free rein?"

"What does he want to amount to? What does 'amounting to anything' amount to? What's the good of it? The greatest man who ever lived is no better off now than the fool whom he chided. Oh, nonsense! Nature is sweet—Nature is beautiful! Why not be true to her? 'Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die!'"

"My dear Woodbury, the greatest philosopher once said: 'Wisdom is to speak the truth and to act consciously according to the laws of Nature.' But you know well that our natures would rebel very soon against your doctrine. You yourself are sufficiently acquainted with the construction of the human body to know that.

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Besides you know better than to state that a dead wise man is no better than a dead fool. You are too agnostic for such a belief. The truth is—"he became excited and walked the floor—"the truth is, we are immortal. Our souls, our entities, are immortal. We have lived for eons and eons of time. We *shall* live forever and forever—to all eternity. It makes the eyes ache and the brain weary to think of it—but it is true. We exist—through no power of our own—but no power can cause our existence to cease. It is fate. It is inevitable. And since this is so, since we *must* live on, why not try to better our condition and the condition of our neighbors? Why not try to purge our lower natures; to check our evil inclinations——"

"There you go," broke in Woodbury; "how do you know it is our lower nature? How do you know it is evil? By what right do you sit in judgment on the nature given you by an Infinite Power? By what

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right do you say, 'That and that in me is bad; I will kill it out. This and this is good; therefore I will encourage it'? How do you know that you are not destroying the noblest part of you?"

"How do I know? I know by the only means we have of knowing anything in this world. I know by results—by the simple law of cause and effect. So long as we live in the world we must be governed by the laws that govern the world. Judging by results alone, Woodbury, you must admit that the conventionalists' '*right*' is about right and their '*wrong*' about wrong. There is no crime without its punishment, and, as the great Mikado says, 'The punishment fits the crime'—even if it be upon the soul alone."

"And we who do not believe in souls?"

"You believe in humanity, and you know the suffering and misery caused by '*yielding to sweet mad moods*,' as you call it. I tell you, Woodbury, it's wicked to set that thing afloat on the world. You've

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sugared it and oiled it so well that it really sounds plausible, hang it all! It is such stuff in our magazines that accounts for the columns of crime and wretchedness in our newspapers. And we call ours a progressive age!"

Woodbury laughed again.

"Why, Jenks, you're absolutely getting pessimistic yourself. Come, come. This will never do. After all, even if they take the verses how many people will see them? And suppose the world read it,—not a man of them would remember it half an hour later."

"Don't you believe it?"

It was the old man who spoke. He had remained silent during the discussion, tapping the window-pane and seemingly inattentive.

"Don't you believe it," he repeated, coming forward.

"You flatter me, Uncle John," said Woodbury, offering him a chair with a smile.

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"Not at all. The power of rhythm is so great that a thought well expressed in poetry frequently has a marked influence, while the same thought in prose would pass unnoticed. We are often impressed with a musical verse whose import we should be likely to frown upon in prose. It is the swing that carries it through. It pleases the ear. And the effect of a *good* thought is trebled when written in good metrical form. Jenks is right. Short poems carry a remarkable power. They are the chance shots that tell so strongly. I knew a man once whose whole life was changed by the force of a few rhythmical lines expressing a mighty thought—just a chance shot."

He took out an old worn note-book and slowly turned the pages as he spoke.

"He was not a bad fellow. His companions in fact called him 'a jolly good fellow.' Clever enough too, but in college he wasted his time sadly. Went in for athletics a little, and went out for—well,

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for some misdemeanor, we will say. Things went on from bad to worse. He drank heavily; couldn't find anything to do but owe money, and after a while he couldn't even do that. Nobody trusted him, and he was beginning to be looked upon as a bad lot generally.

"One day, he was absently reading the death notices in a newspaper. Not that he was interested in the dead or their families; but at the end of the list his eye fell on this. It impressed him. He cut it out and pasted it here in his note-book, which he gave me when he died two years ago."

Woodbury gave an involuntary start, and then listened intently as his uncle read the notice in a calm tranquil voice:

"Died—On Thursday, June 10, Mary, beloved daughter of John and Elizabeth Howard, aged 18 years and 2 months. Funeral private.

"'And the stately ships go on  
To their haveu under the hill:

But oh, for the touch of a vanished hand,  
And the sound of a voice that is still.

Break—break—break—  
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!  
*But the tender grace of a day that is dead  
Will never come back to me."*

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There was a quality in the reader's voice which sent a thrill to the hearts of the two young men who sat listening to Tennyson's eloquent words. No one spoke.

At last the old man said quietly:

"It was only a little verse, but it changed the entire course of a life. He told me this himself two years later, when he had made a man of himself, and held the respect of the community. His death was a great blow to all his friends; particularly to his brother, fifteen years his junior, who idolized him. Perhaps you would like to have this note-book, Woodbury. He always carried it with the clipping just as you see it," and he put the ragged little document into the young man's hand.

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Woodbury paled slightly as he read on the fly-leaf the name of his eldest brother.

Without a word he placed the book in his pocket. Then taking the envelope, sealed, stamped, and addressed as it was, he tore it and its contents into small pieces which fluttered silently and harmlessly to the floor.

# A Case in Point



## A CASE IN POINT.

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**A**T the far end of the piazza in the shadow he was telling her that he loved her. The old, old story, with a few variations, came hesitatingly from his lips, for it was comparatively new to him—he was young.

The waves pounding against the rocks down on the beach, and the strains of a popular waltz which floated through the windows of the hotel pavilion, filled the pauses and smoothed the general jerkiness of his style.

He was going away to-morrow, he said with a slight quaver in his voice,—out West to his ranch—it was all his father had left him; but he was sure to make a fortune in a year or so—and—would she wait?

The girl looked at him appealingly.

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"Two years is such a long time," she said.

"Not if you love me," he pleaded. Then he told her how long he would be willing to wait for her if necessary. He became almost eloquent in his self-pity as he described the loneliness of his life among those rough, degraded men. Her love would be the one bright spot in his life. Without it—

He let the waltz and the waves complete the sentence, which they did with the desired effect upon his companion.

"But suppose you should change?" she ventured.

He reproached her. How could she think he would ever care for another?—but she interrupted him with a gesture.

"Not that way. Suppose you should become different—rough and coarse, like those men—"'

"Edith, is that you, dear?" a voice called from a sheltered corner of the piazza.

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"Yes, mamma."

"You must have your wrap. It is here."

"Let me get it," he murmured. She followed him, however, to where her mother was sitting with a number of married women, whose husbands were toiling in the hot, dusty city, a number of married men whose wives were abroad, and a number of that unencumbered and rather unhappy type known as old bachelors.

The conversation which had evidently been interrupted began afresh. Her mother motioned her to a chair, which she obediently accepted, while her lover was obliged to content himself with a seat on the railing near her.

"It is an undeniable fact," resumed one of the party—it would be superfluous to name his sex—"it is an undeniable fact that after a year of marriage women lose their individuality."

"Nonsense."

"No, it is truth. Take any woman who

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loves her husband. Are not his opinions hers?"

"And take any man who loves his wife. Are not her opinions his?"

"Ah! That is different. Woman is far more easily influenced by surroundings than man."

"On the contrary—if I may be allowed to express my opinion—woman, if she be pure, may live among degraded people unscathed; while man, living among them the same length of time, inevitably sinks to their level."

"He rises again, however, while, if a woman sinks, it is like a stone dropped into the sea."

"But that is due to the fault of society, not to the superiority of man. Social law permits the return of man and prevents the return of woman."

So ran the discussion.

At last one of the group—a bachelor who had been silent all the while—said:

"My friends, our debate has led us into

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a very broad field. A field so broad, in fact, that many of us are lost already, and the rest are making for the fence.

"I have been on the fence all the time, listening in silence to your arguments. They recall an incident of my youth—an incident bearing upon this very subject, although I am not sure that it will assist you in your decision.

"However, it is a curious story—very curious."

When they urged him to tell it he related the narrative in a calm, even voice—almost without a pause. It was as though he read an absorbing tale aloud—unconscious of himself and indifferent to his hearers.

"I remember the first time I ever saw her. I noticed her animated face, her elastic step and graceful figure, as she came into the class-room with a great book under her arm.

"Business had called my father West just as I was ready for college. He was

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all I had. I was his only child. His health was poor, and we were unwilling to be separated. Therefore I accompanied him and entered the Freshman class of a rather well-endowed university in the city where my father was established.

"It was an institution of co-education. We fellows called our fair companions on the road to knowledge 'Co-eds.'

"She was a Co-ed.

"We were in the same class and belonged to the same literary society, in which she was a shining light. Never having known a sister or a girl cousin, I stood in great awe of women, and admired them doubtfully from afar. But as I saw her day after day, I became accustomed to her bright frank smile; learned to respond to her greeting without the humiliating burning blush; and ended by adoring her with all the fervor of my nineteen years.

"One rainy day I resolved to overcome my diffidence and offer her the shelter of

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my umbrella, and the questionable pleasure of my society to her home.

"With impatience and ill-concealed nervousness I watched and waited for her at the foot of the stairs.

"At last she appeared—but not alone.

"John Haskwell carried her books. John Haskwell monopolized her eyes and ears. They passed me in such earnest conversation that—though her mackintosh brushed my sleeve—she didn't even see me.

"His was the happy umbrella which shielded her. He was the happy man who walked triumphantly—as I thought—at her side.

"John Haskwell was a senior, and the president of our society. He was a handsome fellow—endowed with the gift of eloquence, and generally regarded by the boys as something above the ordinary.

"Perhaps my jealousy discovered elements of weakness in his face, and detected a certain shallowness of thought beneath his beautifully turned sentences

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and rolling rhetoric. Still he was a jolly, entertaining companion, possessed of a vivid imagination—a lively sense of humor; and he never took advantage of his pedestal.

"We all liked him and were sincerely sorry when he went to Colorado immediately after graduation. He had slipped through the course of a mining engineer; but even the most sanguine of his admirers acknowledged that laboratory work was not his strong point, and believed that politics was a field much better adapted to his capabilities.

"However, the only earthly possession left him by his father was 'Haskwell's Goose'—a mine from which he confidently expected many golden eggs, and which he was determined to work.

"In later years this ill-fated mine with its ill-chosen, almost prophetic name was enlisted among the prominent standing jokes of the college.

"Before John Haskwell left, it was gen-

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erally understood that they were engaged. In a year he was to return and marry her.

"I must take the rough edges from off the life before she sees it," he said to one of his intimates.

"She afterward informed me that she had accepted him on that very rainy day which dashed cold water on the ardor of my youthful passion.

"She was a fascinating girl. There was something singularly attractive in the way she stood or moved,—in her smile, in her laugh; in the way she said 'Yes' or 'No.' Yes, she was singularly attractive. Besides, we were congenial, and our lives at that time ran in the same groove.

"We became friends.

"She lived with her aunt in one of the suburbs. A twenty minutes' ride on the narrow-gauge train, drawn by the diminutive engine which puffed with importance as it hurried from station to station.

"Many a spring Sunday morning beheld me on that train.

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"We were both botanically inclined, and the wild-flowers in all that beautiful region trembled at the sound of our footsteps.

"The memories of those days are steeped in the odor of pine forests and violets.

"She often spoke of him, and sometimes read me portions of his letters. Portions carefully selected, though her changing color was an excellent interpretation of the parts omitted.

"At first he wrote with enthusiasm of the mine and his prospects; but this gradually diminished, and he suddenly announced that he had sold it—for a mere pittance, as I afterward learned.

"He bought a ranch, and for six months his letters glowed with the magnificent sunsets; expanded with the broad stretch of prairie; and towered in eloquence with the snow-capped peaks of the distant mountains.

"In the most romantic and picturesque language he described his surroundings,

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and spoke of the near future when she would be sharing with him and increasing for him all this glory, sublimity, and beauty.

"But the magnificent sunsets continued day after day, and there was no rain.

"One by one his cattle died.

"At last he was obliged to sell the ranch. Practically he bartered it for a horse, on which he rode to the nearest mining town.

"Here fortune smiled upon him—so he wrote. He made a lucky speculation, and an honest man took him into partnership. What the business was I never knew, nor did she; but after a while the 'honest man' absconded with the profits.

"So two years passed and he had not returned.

"His letters were so hopeful, eloquent, and witty—his constant failures were so well explained, that she never once thought of doubting or blaming him. She, believing in him, hoping with him, pitying him,

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forgot herself, scarcely realized the flight of time, and wrote long sanguine letters of comfort to cheer him.

"At the end of the third year he was teaching school in a small Western village.

"'It is only a stepping-stone, you know,' she said to me one day. 'John says it is only a stepping-stone. There is always so much chance for a young man in the West.'

"I thought of the three years of retrogression, and said nothing.

"We graduated that June. It was all arranged. John Haskwell was coming on to the exercises. They would be married the following day and go West immediately.

"Commencement day arrived. As soon as the excitement was over; when the usual orations, essays, and addresses had been delivered; when the last diploma had been conferred; when the last 'remark' had been made—in fact, as soon as we were dismissed, she hurried from the hall. I

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followed her. She seemed troubled. Her face was flushed. She pulled nervously at her diploma and said:

“John—John didn’t come. He—he couldn’t come——”

“She gave me a telegram which stated little more than that. He couldn’t come; but he would be there the next day in time for the wedding.

“It is too bad,’ I said; ‘he would have been proud to hear that address of yours.’

“Her face brightened.

“‘You think so?’

“A few moments later I pressed her hand, promising—with a secret pang of regret—to be at the wedding.

“And I was.

“Charley Hays—a class-mate—accompanied me, vainly endeavoring to sustain a conversation, for I was unusually silent. The familiar objects flying past the windows reminded me that this was the end—my last trip. She was really going to be married and leave me forever. ‘The sad-

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dest words of tongue or pen' kept coming before my mind in different forms.

"The Express is stopping," Charley said.

"The track of the Western Express crossed ours just before we reached our destination. Our train had halted as usual at the junction; but I had never known the Express to stop before. It generally rushed past like a cyclone, casting cinders in all curious eyes.

"I put my head out of the window. Yes, it paused long enough to drop a passenger and then whirled on again.

"A vague fear took possession of me. As soon as our car pulled into the station, I hurried Charley out, that we might arrive at the house before the other guests.

"As we approached the gate I saw a man hastening across the field.

"The path led from the junction.

"The man carried a valise. He shuffled rather than walked, with head bent forward and eyes upon the ground. His

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clothes, threadbare and shining, were covered with dust. He was quite stout and it was a warm day. A gray slouch hat partly concealed his coarsened features.

"Great heavens!" I exclaimed.

"What is the matter?" asked my companion.

"There is Haskwell. The Express stopped to let him off."

"What! *That* Haskwell? That beggar—"

"He paused, for as we drew nearer he saw that 'the beggar' really was John Haskwell.

"Stay here, Charley. Keep the people talking as long as you can; but don't tell them,' and I ran up the path.

Haskwell was on the steps leading to the piazza.

The door opened.

There she stood on the threshold, all in white. She looked at him. An expression of horror crossed her face and with a startled cry she drew back. He

didn't seem to notice, but putting down his valise advanced toward her with outstretched hands. She shrank away. Then for the first time her eyes fell on me. In an instant she was herself again. Perhaps the sorrowful pity in my face called pride to her rescue.

"Was not this man her fate? Had he not been faithful? Had she not promised?

"She threw on me a glance of indignation as though I had cast a reproach upon her betrothed,—then with a slight effort she placed her little hands in his great red ones, and let him kiss her full upon the lips. With the air of a protector and champion, she drew him into the house.

"I stood like one in a dream. Surely she would not marry him.

"The guests began to arrive and soon the little parlor was filled.

"Charley Hays came and spoke to me, but I didn't hear him. I was waiting—vaguely expecting something to happen.

"And something did happen.

"She entered the room leaning on Haskwell's arm. He tried to look up, but his eye wavered and fell. His clothes were in better repair. The dust and travel-stains were all removed; but there was an air of slovenliness about his shambling figure. The stamp of the backwoods was upon him.

"There was a death-like silence.

"Every one present was stunned by the change three years had wrought in the man.

"How loud and startling the minister's voice seemed as he pronounced the first words of the marriage service!

"She was very pale. I thought once she would faint, but no,—she remained firm to the end.

"Presently I went up to congratulate Mrs. John Haskwell. As her eyes met mine she knew that I had seen and understood. A painful blush mounted to her forehead, and her hand trembled violently. I could not speak. At length I muttered

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something about being her friend always—hoping she would be happy and—‘Good-by.’

“That is all.

“The next year I went abroad. I have never heard of her—of them since.

“It was only one of those incidents—that occur sometimes.

“A curious story—very curious.”

There was a pause. Then a woman spoke.

“It is a most interesting story, and proves, I think, the very point I made:—that man is much more easily influenced by his surroundings than woman. The character of this promising man was entirely changed by three years of hardship.”

“But *was* his character changed? He had elements of weakness to start with.”

“We *all* have elements of weakness. The question is, Did she fall to his level, when given the same surroundings, or did she raise him to hers?”

"If, according to Mrs. B——'s theory, he was so easily influenced by his surroundings, then when *she* surrounded him why should he not rise again; learn to brush his hair and clothes—keep his hands clean—wear a necktie—and wipe his feet on the mat as nicely as he did before he fell?"

"That is in direct contradiction to your theory that a wife loses her individuality; that her husband's opinions are hers. I believe that these two people loved each other, that they were as well suited as people usually are, and that they had the happiness which marriage usually brings. Each influenced the other, and they resided in a blissful state of mediocrity. That is the practical solution of the idea."

"Nonsense! The marriage was altogether a mistake. Within a day she regretted her foolish pride; within a week she was miserable; within a month she loathed him; and within a year she got a divorce."

A Case  
in Point.

A Case  
in Point.

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The deep voice of the sea penetrated the silence that followed—the melodious voice of the sea which speaks a different language to every listener.

It was high tide. The waves, gently lapping at the base of the piazza, proclaimed midnight.

Mrs. Warburton looked toward her daughter, who had grown very pale. She rose and said it was time to go in.

As Edith assented, the wrap she wore slipped from her shoulders. Her lover quickly replaced it.

"Have you nothing to say to me?" he pleaded.

Her lips were slightly compressed, and her eyes rested upon him half-sadly, half-regretfully for a moment.

Then she said:

"Only, 'Good-by.' "

He watched her enter the hotel and his heart ached. For he knew that he had received his answer.







